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Map showing places connected with
ENGLISH LITERARY HISTORY
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BRITISH POETRY AND PROSE

A Book of Readings *Part One — Beowulf to Blake*

EDITED BY

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PREFACE

IN compiling this book the editors have recognized, first, that literature is a fine art; second, that literature has had an historical development both in its forms and in its material, corresponding to changing social conditions and intellectual interests and attitudes; and, third, that it is an expression of the personalities in whom its creative force was incarnate. Accordingly, literature may be approached from three points of view, not, of course, to be sharply separated — the æsthetic, the historical and social, and the personal. From the first point of view the effort has been made to select the most excellent examples of literary genius from *Beowulf* to the close of the nineteenth century. Arranged in chronological order, these will, it is believed, enable the student to gain for himself a consecutive view of the development of literature in accordance with the tastes, interests, and needs of changing generations. As a matter of convenience the conventional division into periods has been adopted, with the warning that these are not to be emphasized as hard-and-fast distinctions. The introductory notes to the several periods are intended to point out general characteristics of their literary production as affected by political and social movements. The introductions to individual authors have been prepared with the aim of *identifying* the writer, of giving a succinct account of his experience in life as a key to his work, and of suggesting the qualities of his mind and art. As it is hoped that the student will draw in his mind an outline of the historical development of English literature, so it is hoped that he will see and enjoy for himself the qualities which make its exponents memorable. The editors have tried to refrain from forcing opinions and conclusions, and in general to avoid doing for the student what he can reasonably be expected to do for himself.

With these principles in mind they have undertaken to select the most characteristic work of each writer, whether it is generally familiar, or comparatively unknown. They have sought to give due representation to the various types and forms of literature, and to illustrate their progress from period to period. For those who wish to approach the field from this point of view rather than the historical, a special introduction to the study of literature according to types has been provided. The editors have not hesitated to include in the volume selections which may be regarded as important primarily as expressive of the intellectual or social characteristics of a period or school. And they have been especially hospitable to work having the interest of autobiography and personal revelation.

In particular the editors have tried to limit the inclusion of fragmentary extracts, however striking or elegant or famous as purple patches, in the belief that for appreciation of a writer's point of view, form, and style, the unit in which he wrote should be considered. Particularly is this study of literature as units necessary in the case of works significant as historical documents. Thus, for example,

both *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Milton's *Areopagitica* have been presented in their entirety. Where space forbade such presentation, complete books, cantos or chapters, or other integral portions of the work have been chosen — e.g., the first book of the *Faërie Queene*, the first two books of *Paradise Lost*, the first voyage of *Gulliver's Travels*, the three chapters of *Sartor Resartus* which give the most vital portion of Carlyle's spiritual biography and creed. Omissions have been made only where the substance became clearly unnecessary, or unsuitable, such as the last third of Ruskin's chapter on the *Nature of Gothic*, which is too technical for reading without diagrams. Occasionally the editors have reduced to its fundamental elements a work too important to be omitted and too long to be reproduced in its entirety, such as Mill's tractate *On Liberty*, and Macaulay's *Essay on Bacon*.

This effort to present units has forced the editors to omit frankly and entirely the two forms of novel and drama. They believe that the study of a novelist's work in selections is of limited value, and that while several fine plays might be presented in completeness to give acquaintance with the dramatic form, the number would be inadequate to give a conception of the history and development of the form. And for both novel and drama there are editions easily accessible to be used as supplementary reading. For the editors are far from claiming anything like completeness or finality for their list of selections. They hope rather that their work may be a basis for widely intelligent choice and reading in accordance with the student's own interests and tastes and in addition to any formal academic requirement. In the description of types, references are given to the drama of the Elizabethan period and the novel of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which the reader cannot fail to follow with greater understanding and interest through his general acquaintance with the characteristics of their periods as revealed in this book.

The editors have kept in mind the fact that the purpose of literature is to be read, not studied. They have therefore endeavored to reduce the apparatus for study to a minimum. They have sought to include in the introductions to periods, writers, and works such preliminary information as may be necessary to general understanding; and for details they have limited explanatory footnotes to a minimum. Absolute consistency in procedure in this matter is both impossible and undesirable. On the whole, the editors have attempted to give such explanations as are indispensable to an immediate understanding of the passage while leaving to the reader the pursuit of allusions which can be traced in generally accessible reference books, histories, encyclopædias, or classical and biographical dictionaries. Quotations and references to literature have not, in general, been referred to their sources, except when they were obviously intended to be read in connection with the work itself, as, for example, Macaulay's references in his *Essay on Milton*. In such cases usually the author's own notes are sufficient, and these have, wherever practicable, been retained.

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A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF TYPES OF LITERATURE

The general arrangement of this anthology is intended to present the development of English literature in historical sequence. For a simultaneous study of forms and types of literature the following classification is offered.

THE EPIC

The epic is a long narrative poem written in an elevated style, based on a racial or national theme, and dealing with supernatural and heroic characters. Folk epics arose spontaneously among primitive peoples; examples are *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Imitations of these in more sophisticated times are called literary epics, the classical example of which is Virgil's *Æneid*. The epic is also imitated for humorous effect in the mock-heroic poem.

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THE BALLAD

The ballad is a short story in song. It employs a simple meter, usually stanzas of

four lines, alternately of four and three feet, sometimes with a refrain. Like the folk epic, the ballad arose spontaneously in primitive times. It was preserved by memory, and only later were the original ballads written down. Most of the famous old ballads in English date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The revival of interest in the past during the eighteenth century led to the recovery and preservation of ballads — Percy's *Reliques of Old English Poetry* being the most famous collection — and to their imitation, as a form of literature.

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RUDYARD KIPLING

A Ballad of East and West, 1337

THE ROMANCE

The romance is a type of narrative in verse or prose which flourished especially in the Middle Ages. It dealt with aristocratic themes of war, adventure, and love, in a spirit of idealism. It was revived in modern times, particularly in connection with the romantic movement of the nineteenth century. Browning developed a type of narrative poem which he called the dramatic romance, examples of which have been included under this heading.

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The tale corresponds in popular literature to the romance in aristocratic. It is an unpretending and realistic narrative of events and human characteristics. Great numbers of tales were afloat in the Middle Ages, preserved, like the ballads, by oral tradition. Many were directed to moral edification; others to counsel in ways of gaining worldly success; others merely recorded striking or humorous episodes, practical jokes, etc. Many collections of tales were made in the Renaissance, such as those of Boccaccio in Italy, and Chaucer in England. It was a convention to bind such collections together by a frame story, such as that furnished by Chaucer's account of the Canterbury pilgrims. The short story is a modern outgrowth of the tale, differing chiefly in its unity and concentration, and its avoidance of diffusion of interest. Examples of modern short stories are those of Poe, Stevenson, and Kipling.

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The allegory is a story in prose or verse specifically intended to teach a lesson, in which the characters are personifications of

human qualities. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is a well-known example. The fables of Æsop and the parables of Jesus are short allegories.

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THE LYRIC

The lyric is a short poem expressive of the emotion of the author or of some character whom he represents. It was originally intended to be sung, but often in modern times it merely suggests a connection with music. The lyric is various in its forms and uses.

The Sonnet

Of the established forms of lyric the sonnet is most important. Originating in Southern France in the twelfth century, it was introduced into Italy, where it was practiced by Dante, Petrarch, and other poets. It was brought to England in the early sixteenth century by Sir Thomas Wyatt. It enjoyed great vogue in the later years of the century, as an expression of courtly love. Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Daniel, Drayton, and many others wrote series or sequences of sonnets. The sonnet was also turned to reflective and religious, and later to political themes.

The sonnet properly consists of fourteen lines of five feet, divided into two parts, the

octave of eight and the sestet of six lines. In the Italian sonnet the octave rhymes *abbaabba*; the sestet employs the rhymes *cde* in various orders, avoiding the couplet at the close. The English sonnet is an adaptation used by the Earl of Surrey, which consists of three quatrains, *ab ab, cd cd, ef ef*, closed by a couplet *gg*. This form was followed by Shakespeare. The sonnet sequence lends itself to narrative as in Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, and in Meredith's *Modern Love*, where the "sonnet" is expanded to sixteen lines.

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The Ode

The ode was a form of lyric poetry of recognized structure among the Greeks. Pindar's odes have been imitated by English poets, notably Cowley and Gray, but in general the term is applied by poets freely to sustained lyric utterances, based on elevated themes and often intended for some dignified celebration. The ode form usually connotes irregular structure, permitting change of rhythm, meter, and rhyme scheme according to the mood.

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FRANCIS THOMPSON

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The Elegy

The eclogue and elegy were originally of late Greek origin. The poet Theocritus in Alexandria, remembering the songs of goat-

herds which he had heard in his native Sicily, imitated them in more cultivated form. Some of these were love songs, others songs sung in competition among shepherds for prizes, others were dirges on the death of a dead shepherd. This pastoral verse was imitated by Virgil, and later by the poets of the Renaissance. In particular, the elegy became a recognized medium for the expression of grief, and many of the great mourning poems in English have taken this form.

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ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN
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The Task: Book IV, The Winter Evening, 639

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Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour July 13, 1798, 687

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ROBERT BROWNING

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EDWARD FITZGERALD

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám of Naishápúr, 1248

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

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GEORGE MEREDITH

Hard Weather, 1324

SATIRE

The satire was originally a poem holding up to ridicule and condemnation follies and vices, private or public. In modern literature satire is a mood rather than a specific form.

ELIZABETHAN

GEORGE GASCOIGNE

Piers Ploughman: From *The Steel Glass*, 266

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ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

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The epigram is a condensed statement of fact or opinion, usually in four lines.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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Epigram on Milton, 434

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THE ESSAY

The essay is a form of prose which, like the lyric, is of wide and various application. Originally applied by Bacon to what he called "a set of dispersed meditations," as suggestive of their tentative character, it has been used to designate writings as different as Lamb's whimsical personalities, and Macaulay's brief biographies. Certain types of the essay may be distinguished as Personal or Familiar, Reflective or Philosophical, Historical, or as Criticism of Literature and Art, and Criticism of Life.

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WILLIAM HAZLITT

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THOMAS DE QUINCEY

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SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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ELIZABETHAN

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From *The Defense of Poetry*, 260

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

JOHN DRYDEN

From *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 435

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WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, 718

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Biographia Literaria: Chapters X, XIV,
 XVII, XVIII, 749

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JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

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The Stones of Venice, Vol. II, Chapter VI,
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Unto This Last, Essay I, 1152

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MATTHEW ARNOLD

Preface to *Essays in Criticism* — First
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The Function of Criticism at the Present
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THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

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 ral Knowledge, 1220

A Liberal Education; and Where to Find
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On the Physical Basis of Life, 1230

WALTER PATER

Studies in the History of the Renaissance
 — Conclusion, 1286

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

The Lantern-Bearers, 1304

Pulvis et Umbra, 1309

A Christmas Sermon, 1312

THE DIALOGUE

The dialogue was a form of exposition and argument, largely used by Greek and Roman writers, the dialogues of Plato being most famous. It is only occasionally employed in modern times. Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* are in part directed to developing ideas and opinions; in part to revealing character.

EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

Imaginary Conversations:

Marcellus and Hannibal, 856

Leofric and Godiva, 857

Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, 860

Bossuet and the Duchess de Fontanges, 862

The Empress Catharine and Princess Dashkof, 866

THE ORATION

The oration was a classic form of great importance in the days of Athens and Republican Rome. British Parliamentary institutions also fostered a type of political argument intended for oral delivery. In the debates of the Long Parliament at the time of the Civil War, oratory was a great public weapon. Milton in approaching Parliament on the subject of a free press modeled his address on the classic orations of Isocrates. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries likewise furnished many examples of British eloquence of which Burke was the accepted master.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

JOHN MILTON

Areopagitica, 399

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

EDMUND BURKE

From *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, *Esq.*, 635

THE SERMON

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

JEREMY TAYLOR

From *Of Slavery and Pains Eternal*, 359

BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The biography was written in Greece and Rome largely for purposes of commemoration of, or inspiration to, civic virtue. In the Renaissance it became important as a record of experience, and this function has increased its interest and value until at present it is one of the most popular forms of literature. Realism and frankness of portrayal are necessary elements, in both of which Boswell's *Johnson* set a standard. Autobiography likewise owes its value to these qualities, of which Pepys' *Diary* is a notable instance.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THOMAS FULLER

The Life of Sir Francis Drake, 356

SAMUEL PEPYS

From *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 423

JOHN BUNYAN

From *Grace Abounding*, 444

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

JAMES BOSWELL

From *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, 590

EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The Prelude:

From Book First: *Childhood and School-time*, 697

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LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY

THOMAS CARLYLE

Sartor Resartus:

Book II, Chapters VII, VIII, IX; Book III, Chapter VIII, 948

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

From *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 1039

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

Autobiography, 1215

WALTER PATER

The Child in the House, 1291

THE DRAMA AND THE NOVEL

Two important longer forms of literature, which cannot properly be represented in this work, are the drama and the novel.

The drama originated in religious ceremonies among primitive peoples, and achieved distinction in Athens in the fifth century B.C. and later in Rome. The drama in the Middle Age likewise owed its revival to religious influences, and scenes from the Bible, or the lives of the saints, were acted in the churches on appropriate days. These were later taken over by the guilds of artisans, and performed out of doors on holidays, upon movable stages or pageants. Gradually, companies of professional actors were formed who acted in the courtyards of inns, or other public places. Thus, the popular drama was secularized. At the same time a revival of the classical drama was taking place in schools and universities. The first theater was built in London in 1579. Others rapidly followed, and the drama written in blank verse became the leading form of popular literature in the early seventeenth century. With this greatest period of the flourishing of the drama are connected the names of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, and others. The theaters were closed by the Puritans in 1642, but reopened after the Restoration, when Dryden and Congreve became the leading dramatists. In the nineteenth century, determined efforts were made to revive the poetic drama, to which Byron, Shelley, Tennyson, and Browning contributed. Toward the close of the century, the realistic prose drama became a vehicle for social criticism in the hands of Mr. G. B. Shaw, Mr. John Galsworthy, and others.

A collection of plays illustrating fully the progress of the drama from the Middle Ages to the present is Matthews and Lieder, *The Chief British Dramatists*.

The novel is a long narrative in prose, partaking of the qualities of the epic, the romance, the tale, and, particularly in its modern form, of the biography. Features of the novel may also be attributed to the influence

of the drama, the essay, and the lyric. In the Elizabethan period, large numbers of stories were translated and adapted, one of them furnishing the germ of John Lyly's *Euphues*, a didactic narrative, accompanied by essays, which in the second part, *Euphues and His England*, becomes a sort of novel of manners. Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* shows the influence of the epic, through the Greek romance, and the romance of chivalry. A novel by Thomas Nash, called *The Unfortunate Traveller*, imitated in England a type of novel destined to be very popular, the picaresque romance, in which the hero of the chivalric romance, intent on idealistic adventure, is replaced by the *picaro*, or rogue, whose motive is the realistic one of cheating his way through the world.

The interest in human experience in the late seventeenth century showed itself in the popularity of biography, and this speedily became fiction. Defoe's novels, particularly *Robinson Crusoe*, are excellent examples of this process. Thenceforth the English novel may be described as fictional biography or autobiography. Such is the character of the eighteenth-century novels by Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne. The didactic element appears strongly in fiction at the close of the eighteenth century, and at the same time the revival of romantic feeling shows itself in the novel dealing with the past.

In the fiction of the nineteenth century, the historical novel is important. From the time of Sir Walter Scott, nearly every great novelist has contributed to this type. The industrial and social problems of the century are reflected in the novels of Charles Dickens and Charles Kingsley. At the beginning of the century, we have admirable pictures of English manners in the novels of Jane Austen; and this realistic strain remains one of the chief qualities of nineteenth-century fiction, in Thackeray and Trollope. The philosophical element of fiction, reflecting the influence of science, becomes stronger in the work of George Eliot, George Meredith, and Thomas Hardy. Toward the close of the century, a revival of romanticism is seen in the work of Stevenson, Kipling, and Joseph Conrad.

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

BRITISH POETRY AND PROSE



THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

English literature first began to be when the Angles and Saxons, who had won for themselves a new home in the island of Britain, were converted to Christianity and learned from the Christian missionaries the art of writing. It flourished vigorously for some four hundred years, and then with the Norman Conquest suffered a long period of almost total eclipse, during which the language itself underwent such radical changes that this earlier literature became unintelligible to Englishmen. When in the fourteenth century English again became the vehicle of a fine literature, it was to French and Italian models that writers turned for inspiration. But cut off as it is from the continuous tradition of our later literature, the literature of Anglo-Saxon England is an integral part of the great heritage of English-speaking people. It shows the same qualities of robust vigor and bold imagination which appear in all later English writers who are in their temper most completely English. Since the time of Tennyson and William Morris it has begun to make its influence felt upon modern literature.

When Julius Cæsar invaded Britain in 55 B.C., he found there a Celtic people who spoke a language similar to the Gaelic of Ireland and to the Celtic speech which still survives in parts of Wales and in the Highlands of Scotland. A century later Britain became a province of the Roman Empire; and its people gradually adopted the civilization of Rome and, among the town-dwellers at least, the Latin language. But this Celto-Roman civilization was short-lived. It was destroyed by the Germanic tribes of Angles and Saxons who shortly after the middle of the fifth century began to cross the North Sea, first as piratical raiders, later as ruthless conquerors. Before the year 600, these invading tribes possessed the whole island except the mountainous country which fringes it on the West and North. It was they who gave to their new home the name "Englaland," land of the Angles; and their speech, which they called "Englisc," a dialect of Low German closely related to the language still spoken in the islands off the northern coast of Holland, became what we call the English language.

The invading Angles and Saxons brought with them their own rude but not ignoble culture which had been affected hardly at all by the civilization of Rome. Something of their way of life may be gathered from the manners and customs, and the ideals of conduct, poetically depicted in the story of *Beowulf*. Each petty tribe had its "king" who was surrounded by his faithful company of warlike followers, to whom he distributed in his great "mead-hall" the plunder won in battle. They brought also from their continental home the rudiments of our earliest literature. At each tribal court was to be found the "scop" who put into poetic form, and sang to the accompaniment of his harp, the exploits of his lord or the heroic legends of his tribe; and these epic lays were spread abroad by the gleeman, whose profession it was to know them and recite them to an assembled company. It is from the matter of such lays as these, brought across the seas by the invading tribes, that a more sophisticated poet later put together his epic story of *Beowulf*. We have in *Beowulf* echoes of other heroic lays; and there can be no doubt that still others have perished without leaving a trace.

In 597, a Roman missionary named Augustine, sent by Pope Gregory the Great, landed in Kent; and shortly afterwards missionaries from Ireland brought the Christian religion to northern England. The Angles and Saxons were ready converts, and within a century from the landing of Augustine the religion of the pagan North had yielded to the Cross, and the pagan scop had given place to the Christian poet.

With the Christian religion came the rich civilization of Latin Christianity. Monasteries were established all over the country, which became centers of learning, where the Latin classics as well as the writings of the Fathers were copied and read. This Christian civilization of Anglo-Saxon England is vividly described for us in *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, written in Latin prose by the Venerable Bede (673-735), a scholarly monk of the monastery at Jarrow in Northumbria. It is Bede who has preserved the record of the first English poet whose name has come down to us, Caedmon, a lay brother of the monastery of Whitby, who put into the alliterating measure of *Beowulf* poetical paraphrases of portions of the Bible. Of Caedmon's poetry all but a short hymn quoted by Bede has perished. We have similar paraphrases of parts of Genesis and

Exodus and Daniel which were formerly believed to be by Caedmon, and are still called "Caedmonian" though now believed to be of later date. In them the Biblical stories are freely retold with much of the vigor and the delight in battle which characterize *Beowulf*.

The Christian poetry of Anglo-Saxon England is at its best in the writings of Cynewulf and his imitators. Of Cynewulf's life we know nothing with certainty. He probably lived in Northumbria and wrote about the middle of the eighth century. Four poems are signed in riddling fashion with his name — two legends of Christian saints, a short poem called *The Fates of the Apostles*, and the *Christ*, a mystic rhapsody, done with profound religious fervor and vivid poetic power, on Christ's ascension and His coming again with power to judge the world. Other poems which may be by Cynewulf, or by an imitator of his art, are the *Andreas*, which deals with the marvelous missionary adventures of St. Andrew the Apostle, and the *Phoenix*, a very lovely allegory of the resurrection. To the same general school of Northumbrian poetry belong the more lyric, elegiac poems, *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*.

The literary culture of Northumbria, and the poetry fostered by it, were suddenly crushed by the Danish invasions which began before the end of the eighth century. It was in Wessex, south of the valley of the Thames, that English literature next found a home. Here Alfred the Great, King of the West-Saxons from 871 to 901, succeeded in checking the Danes and in establishing peace and prosperity. Alfred was a patron of learning and a lover of literature. He collected and preserved the poetry of Northumbria, which has in consequence survived to us only in a West-Saxon form, and himself translated or caused to be translated into English various Latin writings — among them Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* — which he thought most useful to the intellectual life of his people. He also began the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which was continued year by year for a century after his death. Into it were incorporated two fine historical poems, *The Battle of Brunanburh* (937) and *The Battle of Maldon* (991), which mark the end of Anglo-Saxon poetry. With the eloquent homilies of Aelfric (about 1000) ends the earliest period of English literature; for even before the Norman Conquest of 1066 French had become the polite language of England, and consequently the medium of all literary composition which did not prefer the greater dignity of Latin.

For the general history of the period one may read Chapter I of Green's *Short History of the English People*; for an account of the literature, Volume I of *The Cambridge History of English Literature* and Stopford Brooke's *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest* (Macmillan) are the best guides. The student who wishes to extend beyond the selections contained in the present volume his acquaintance with Old English literature should use J. D. Spaeth's *Old English Poetry* (Princeton University Press), Cook and Tinker's *Select Translations from Old English Prose* (Ginn), and C. W. Kennedy's *The Poems of Cynewulf* and *The Poems of Caedmon* (Dutton).

BEOWULF

Modern Version by J. Duncan Spaeth¹

In the British Museum is preserved a manuscript written about the year 1000 A.D. which contains the Old English epic of *Beowulf*. To the lucky survival of this precious volume we owe our knowledge of the heroic poem which stands at the very beginning of English literature. But the poem itself is older than the one surviving copy of it. It was probably composed somewhere about the year 750 A.D. in the far north of England. The name and identity of its author are hopelessly lost. The material which this nameless author put into its present poetic form is still older — a body of oral lays brought over from the Continent by the Angles and Saxons when they settled in the island of Britain. These lays embodied a certain amount of historic fact — Hygelac, uncle of Beowulf and his predecessor as king of the Geats, is an historic chieftain who died about 520 A.D. But if the hero, Beowulf, is to some extent an historic personage, the greater part of his heroic exploits have been built up out of legend and myth. One of the Old Norse sagas, the *Grettis Saga*, contains what is clearly a variant version of Beowulf's fight with Grendel's mother below the waters of the haunted mere. The scene of the poem is in the regions of the Baltic Sea, modern Denmark and southern Sweden; England is never mentioned. Though the English poet has supplied a certain amount of Christian comment, the story itself and all its persons are purely pagan. It is the pagan divinity Wyrd, or Destiny, who shapes their ends. The manners and customs portrayed belong also to the pagan North. Pagan also are the qualities of character which the poem extols — courage, loyalty, generosity. To these fine and abiding virtues the Christian tradition has taught us to add another, the quality of modesty. Beowulf is unashamedly boastful.

The story of the poem falls into three episodes: Beowulf's fight with Grendel, the monster who has been ravaging the great mead-hall of Hrothgar, king of the Scyldings; the fight with Grendel's

¹ By the kind permission of Professor Spaeth and of the Princeton University Press this spirited version of *Beowulf*, and those of the *Wanderer* and of the *Battle of Maldon* which follow, are reprinted from Professor Spaeth's volume of *Old English Poetry*, Princeton, 1921.

mother who has sought to avenge her son; finally, after the lapse of fifty years, the fight of the aged Beowulf with the fire-breathing dragon who has been laying waste the kingdom of which Beowulf is now king.

The poem is written in that primitive form of English, spoken and written before the Norman Conquest, which we call Old English or Anglo-Saxon. Though actually our own speech in an earlier form, it is so unlike modern English that it presents all the difficulties of a foreign language; so that most modern readers must be content to know it only in translation. In the original the first five lines of the poem run thus:

Hwæt! we Gar-Dena in gear-dagum
 peod cyninga prym gefrunon,
 hu þa æpelingas ellen fremedon.
 Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena preatum,
 monegum mægþum meodo-setla ofteah.

The metrical form, freely reproduced in Professor Spaeth's rendering, consists of a line of four feet. Each foot contains a heavily stressed syllable and a varying number of unstressed syllables. The line is divided into halves by a heavy cæsural pause after the second foot. The two halves of the line are bound together by alliteration of stressed syllables — normally the first, second, and third, or merely the first and third. There is no use of rhyme. A characteristic feature of Old English poetry is the device of repetition in parallel clauses. As in the Hebrew poetry of the Psalms, an idea is repeated, sometimes in a series of striking metaphors, a line or half-line echoing that which precedes it.

The poem has been many times translated. An excellent translation of the entire text into modern English prose is that of C. B. Tinker (Henry Holt and Co.). The version by J. D. Spaeth printed here is condensed to about two thirds of the original length by the omission of passages not essential to the story. The passages omitted are briefly summarized in prose. The result of this condensation is a narrative considerably more unified than the original. A good edition of the original text is that of F. Klaeber, Boston, 1922.

BEOWULF

The Myth of the Sheaf-Child¹

List to an old-time lay of the Spear-Danes,
 Full of the prowess of famous kings,
 Deeds of renown that were done by the
 heroes;

Scyld the Sheaf-Child from scourging foemen,
 From raiders a-many their mead-halls
 wrested.

He lived to be feared, though first as a waif,
 Puny and frail he was found on the shore.

He grew to be great, and was girt with power
 Till the border-tribes all obeyed his rule,
 And sea-folk hardy that sit by the whale-
 path

Gave him tribute, a good king was he.
 Many years after, an heir was born to him,
 A goodly youth, whom God had sent
 To stay and support his people in need.

(Long time leaderless living in woe,
 The sorrow they suffered He saw full well.)
 The Lord of Glory did lend him honor,
 Beowulf's² fame afar was borne,
 Son of old Scyld in the Scandian lands.
 A youthful heir must be open-handed,
 Furnish the friends of his father with plenty,
 That thus in his age, in the hour of battle,

Willing comrades may crowd around him
 Eager and true. In every tribe
 Honorable deeds shall adorn an earl. 25
 The aged Scyld, when his hour had come,
 Famous and praised, departed to God.
 His faithful comrades carried him down
 To the brink of the sea, as himself had bid-
 den,

The Scyldings' friend, before he fell silent, 30
 Their lord beloved who long had ruled them.
 Out in the bay a boat was waiting
 Coated with ice, 'twas the king's own barge.
 They lifted aboard their bracelet-bestower,
 And down on the deck their dear lord laid, 35
 Hard by the mast. Heaped-up treasure
 Gathered from far they gave him along.
 Never was ship more nobly laden
 With wondrous weapons and warlike gear.
 Swords and corselets covered his breast, 40
 Floating riches to ride afar with him
 Out o'er the waves at the will of the sea.
 No less they dowered their lord with treasure,
 Things of price, than those who at first
 Had launched him forth as a little child 45
 Alone on the deep to drift o'er the billows.
 They gave him to boot a gilded banner,
 High o'er his head they hung it aloft.
 Then set him adrift, let the surges bear him.
 Sad were their hearts, their spirits mournful; 50
 Man hath not heard, no mortal can say
 Who found that barge's floating burden.

¹ Scyld, the "Sheaf-Child," is the mythical ancestor of Hrothgar, King of the Scyldings, or Spear-Danes.

² Not the hero of the poem, but another of the same name, an ancestor of King Hrothgar.

I

*The Line of the Danish Kings and the
Building of Heorot*

Now Beowulf was king in the burgs of the
Scyldings,

Famed among folk. (His father had left
The land of the living.) From his loins was
sprung

Healfdene the royal, who ruled to old age,
Gray and battlegrim, the bold-hearted
Scyldings. 5

Children four to this chief of the people
Woke unto life, one after another;
Heorogar and Hrothgar, and Halga the
brave,

And winsome Sigeneow, a Scyfling she
wedded;

Saewela's queen they say she became. 10
To Hrothgar was given such glory in battle,
Such fame he won, that his faithful band
Of youthful warriors waxed amain.

So great had grown his guard of kinsmen,
That it came in his mind to call on his
people 15

To build a mead-hall, mightier far
Than any e'er seen by the sons of men,
Wherein to bestow upon old and young,
Gifts and rewards, as God vouchsafed them,
Save folk-share lands and freemen's lives. 20
Far and wide the work was published;
Many a tribe, the mid-earth round,
Helped to fashion the folk-stead fair.
With speed they built it, and soon 'twas
finished,

Greatest of halls. Heorot ¹ he named it, 25
Whose word was law o'er lands afar;
Nor failed in his promise, but freely dealt
Gifts at the feast. The fair hall towered
Wide-gabled and high, awaiting its doom,
The sweep of fire; not far was the time 30
That ancient feuds should open afresh,
And sword-hate sunder sons from fathers.

In the darkness dwelt a demon-sprite
Whose heart was filled with fury and hate,
When he heard each night the noise of
revel 35

Loud in the hall, laughter and song.
To the sound of the harp the singer chanted
Lays he had learned, of long ago;
How the Almighty had made the earth,
Wonder-bright lands, washed by the ocean; 40
How he set, triumphant, sun and moon
To lighten all men that live on the earth.
He brightened the land with leaves and
branches;

Life he created for every being,
Each in its kind, that moves upon earth. 45
So, happy in hall, the heroes lived,
Wanting naught, till one began
To work them woe, a wicked fiend.
The demon grim was Grendel called,
March-stalker huge, the moors he roamed. 50
The joyless creature had kept long time
The lonely fen, the lairs of monsters,
Cast out from men, an exile accurst.
On offspring of Cain, the killing of Abel
Was justly avenged by the Judge Eternal. 55
Nought gained by the feud the faithless
murderer;¹

He was banished unblest from abode of men.
And hence arose the host of miscreants,
Monsters and elves and eldritch sprites,
Warlocks and giants, that warred against
God; 60
Jotuns and goblins; He gave them their due.

II

*The Ravaging of Heorot Hall by the Monster
Grendel*

When night had fallen, the fiend crept near
To the lofty hall, to learn how the Danes
In Heorot fared, when the feasting was done.
The aethelings ² all within he saw
Asleep after revel, not recking of danger, 5
And free from care. The fiend accurst,
Grim and greedy, his grip made ready;
Snatched in their sleep, with savage fury,
Thirty warriors; away he sprang
Proud of his prey, to repair to his home, 10
His blood-dripping booty to bring to his lair.
At early dawn, when day-break came,
The vengeance of Grendel was revealed to all;
Their wails after wassail were widely heard,
Their morning-woe. The mighty ruler, 15
The aetheling brave, sat bowed with grief.
The fate of his followers filled him with
sorrow,

When they traced the tracks of the treacher-
ous foe,
Fiend accurst. Too fierce was that onset,
Too loathsome and long, nor left them re-
spite. 20

The very next night, anew he began
To maim and to murder, nor was minded to
slacken

His fury of hate, too hardened in crime.
'Twas easy to find then earls who preferred
A room elsewhere, for rest at night, 25
A bed in the bowers, when they brought this
news

¹ The word Heorot means hart, stag.

¹ i. e. Cain. ² princes.

Of the hall-foe's hate; and henceforth all
Who escaped the demon, kept distance safe.

So Grendel wrongfully ruled the hall,
One against all till empty stood 30
That lordly mansion, and long remained so.
For the space of twelve winters the Scyld-
ings' Friend¹

Bore in his breast the brunt of this sorrow,
Measureless woe. In mournful lays
The tale became known; 'twas told abroad 35
In gleemen's songs, how Grendel had warred
Long against Hrothgar, and wreaked his hate
With murderous fury through many a year,
Refusing to end the feud perpetual,
Or decently deal with the Danes in parley, 40
Take their tribute for treaty of peace;
Nor could their leaders look to receive
Pay from his hands for the harm that he
wrought.

The fell destroyer kept feeding his rage
On young and old. So all night long 45
He prowled o'er the fen and surprised his
victims,

Death-shadow dark. (The dusky realms
Where the hell-runes haunt are hidden from
men.)

So the exiled roamer his raids continued;
Wrong upon wrong in his wrath he heaped. 50
In midnights dark he dwelt alone
'Mongst Heorot's trophies and treasures rich.
Great was the grief of the gold-friend of
Scyldings,

Vexed was his mood that he might not visit
His goodly throne, his gift-seat proud, 55
Deprived of joy by the judgment of God.
Many the wise men that met to discover
Ways of escape from the scourge of affliction.
Often they came for counsel together;
Often at heathen altars they made 60
Sacrifice-offerings, beseeching their idols
To send them deliverance from assault of the
foe.

Such was their practice, they prayed to the
Devil;

The hope of the heathen on hell was fixed,
The mood of their mind. Their Maker they
knew not, 65

The righteous Judge and Ruler on high.
The Wielder of Glory they worshipped not,
The Warden of Heaven. Woe be to him
Whose soul is doomed through spite and
envy,

In utter despair and agony hopeless 70
Forever to burn. But blessed is he
Who, after this life, the Lord shall seek,
Eager for peace in the arms of the Father.

1 Hrothgar.

III

The Voyage of Beowulf to the Hall of Hrothgar

Thus boiled with care the breast of Hrothgar;
Ceaselessly sorrowed the son of Healfdene,
None of his chieftains might change his lot.
Too fell was the foe that afflicted the people
With wrongs unnumbered, and nightly hor-
rors. 5

Then heard in his home king Hygelac's
thane,¹

The dauntless Jute,² of the doings of Grendel.
In strength he outstripped the strongest of
men

That dwell in the earth in the days of this
life.

Gallant and bold, he gave command 10
To get him a boat, a good wave-skimmer.
O'er the swan-road, he said, he would seek
the king

Noble and famous, who needed men.
Though dear to his kin, they discouraged
him not;

The prudent in counsel praised the adven-
ture, 15

Whetted his valor, awaiting good omens.

So Beowulf chose from the band of the Jutes
Heroes brave, the best he could find;
He with fourteen followers hardy,
Went to embark; he was wise in seamanship,
Showed them the landmarks, leading the
way. 21

Soon they descried their craft in the water,
At the foot of the cliff. Then climbed aboard
The chosen troop; the tide was churning
Sea against sand; they stowed away 25
In the hold of the ship their shining armor,
War-gear and weapons; the warriors launched
Their well-braced boat on her welcome voy-
age.

Swift o'er the waves with a wind that
favored,

Foam on her breast, like a bird she flew; 30
A day and a night they drove to seaward,
Cut the waves with the curving prow,
Till the seamen that sailed her sighted the
land,

Shining cliffs and coast-wise hills,
Headlands bold. The harbor opened, 35
Their cruise was ended. Then quickly the
sailors,

¹ Beowulf.

² In the original, *Geat*. This tribe of Geats, to which Beowulf belonged, lived somewhere on the shores of the Baltic, possibly in Jutland, possibly in southern Sweden. Professor Spaeth's translation assumes that it is identical with the Jutes.

The crew of Weder-folk, clambered ashore,
 Moored their craft with clank of chain-mail,
 And goodly war-gear. God they thanked
 That their way was smooth o'er the surging
 waves. 40

High on the shore, the Scylding coast-guard
 Saw from the cliff where he kept his watch,
 Glittering shields o'er the gang-plank carried,
 Polished weapons: it puzzled him sore, 44
 He wondered in mind who the men might be.
 Down to the strand on his steed came riding
 Hrothgar's thane, with threatening arm
 Shook his war-spear and shouted this chal-
 lenge:

"Who are ye, men, all mailed and harnessed,
 That brought yon ship o'er the broad sea-
 ways, 50

And hither have come across the water,
 To land on our shores. Long have I stood
 As coast-guard here, and kept my sea-watch,
 Lest harrying foe with hostile fleet
 Should dare to damage our Danish¹ land. 55
 Armed men never from overseas came
 More openly hither. But how do ye know
 That law of the land doth give ye leave
 To come thus near. I never have seen
 Statelier earl upon earth than him, — 60
 Yon hero in harness. No house-carl he,
 In lordly array, if looks speak true,
 And noble bearing. But now I must learn
 Your names and country, ere nearer ye come,
 Underhand spies, for aught I know, 65
 In Danish land. Now listen ye strangers,
 In from the sea, to my open challenge:
 Heed ye my words and haste me to know
 What your errand and whence ye have come."

IV

Beowulf's Words with the Coast-Guard

Him the hero hailed with an answer,
 The war-troop's leader, his word-hoarded un-
 locked:

"In truth we belong to the tribe of the Jutes;
 We are Hygelac's own hearth-companions.
 Far among folk my father was known, 5
 A noble chieftain, his name was Ecgtheow.
 Honored by all, he ended his days
 Full of winters and famed in the land.
 Wise men everywhere well remember him.
 Hither we fare with friendly purpose 10
 To seek thy lord, the son of Healfdene,
 The land-protector. Instruct us kindly.
 Bound on adventure we visit thy lord,

The prince of the Danes. Our purpose is
 open;
 Nought keep we secret; thou surely wilt
 know 15

If the tale we were told is true or not:
 That among the Scyldings a monster strange,
 A nameless demon, when nights are dark,
 With cruel cunning, for cause unknown,
 Works havoc and slaughter. I have in mind
 A way to help your wise king Hrothgar, 21
 Your ruler to rid of the ravening foe,
 If ever his tide of troubles shall turn,
 The billows of care that boil in his breast
 Shall cool and subside, and his sorrow be
 cured; 25

Else, failing my purpose, forever hereafter
 He shall suffer distress, while stands on its
 hill,

Mounting on high, his matchless hall."
 Straight answered the coast-guard, astride
 his horse,

The warrior brave: "Twixt words and deeds
 A keen-witted thane, if he thinks aright, 31
 Must well distinguish and weigh the differ-
 ence.

Your words I believe, that you wish no evil
 To the Scylding lord. I will let you bring
 Your shields ashore and show you the way.
 My comrades here shall keep the watch, 36
 From meddling foe defend your craft,
 Your fresh-tarred boat, fast by the beach,
 And faithfully guard her till again she bear
 With curving bow, o'er the bounding main,
 Her master well-loved to the Wedemark. 41
 Fortune oft favors the fighter who yields not;
 Hero unflinching comes unhurt from the
 fray."

Landward they hastened, leaving behind
 them 44

Fast at her moorings the full-bosomed boat,
 The ship at anchor. Shone the boar-heads,
 Gleaming with gold, o'er the guards of their
 helmets;

Bright and fire-forged the beast kept watch.
 Forward they pressed, proud and adven-
 turous,

Fit for the fight, till afar they descried 50
 The high-peaked radiant roof of the hall.

Of houses far-praised, 'neath heaven by the
 people

That inhabit the earth, this house was most
 famous,

The seat of King Hrothgar; its splendor
 gleamed bright

O'er many a land. Their leader well-armed
 Showed them the shining shield-burg of
 heroes, 56

And set them right on the road to their goal.

¹ The Scyldings are "Danes"; but their home is in modern Sweden.

Then, wheeling his steed, he wished them
farewell:

"'Tis time that I leave you; the Lord of
Heaven,
The Father Almighty in mercy keep you 60
Safe on your journey; seaward I turn
Watch to keep and ward against foe."

V

*Beowulf's Arrival at the Hall and the Manner
of his Reception*

The street was stone-paved; straight it led
To the goal of their journey. Glistened their
byrnies 1

Stout and strong-linked; sang the rings
Of their iron mail as they marched along,
In armor and helmet right up to the hall. 5
Sea-voyage-sated, they set their shields,
Their linden-woods broad, along the wall.
As they bent to the bench, their byrnies
clattered.

They stacked their spears that stood in a
row,

Ashwood tipped with iron above; 10
Well-equipped was the warlike band.
A stately Dane the strangers addressed,
Asked who they were and whence they had
come:

"Whence do ye bear your burnished shields,
Your visored helmets and harness gray 15
Your heap of spear-shafts? A servant of
Hrothgar's,

His herald, am I. Hardier strangers,
Nobler in mien, have I never seen.

'Tis clear you come to the court of Hrothgar,
Not outlaws and beggars, but bent on ad-
venture." 20

To him gave answer the hero brave,
The lord of the Weders these words returned,
Bold 'neath his helmet: "We are Hygelac's
men,

His board-companions. I am Beowulf
called.

Ready am I the ruler to answer, 25
To say to thy lord, the son of Healfdene,
Why we have come his court to seek,
If he will graciously grant us a hearing."
Wulfgar replied: (he was prince of the Wen-
dles,

His noble renown was known to many, 30
His courage in war, and wisdom in counsel)

"I will carry thy quest to the king of the
Danes,

And ask him whether he wishes to grant

1 coats of chain-armor.

The boon thou dost ask of the breaker-of-
rings,

To speak to himself concerning thy journey:
And straight will I bring thee the answer he
sends." 36

Swiftly he hid him where Hrothgar sat,
White-haired and old, his earls around him.
Stately he strode, till he stood in the presence
Of the king of the Danes, — in courtly ways
Was Wulfgar skilled; he spoke to his lord: 41
"Hither have fared from a far country,
A band of Jutes o'er the bounding sea.
Their leader and chief by his chosen com-
rades

Is Beowulf called; this boon they ask: 45
That they may find with thee, my lord,
Favor of speech; refuse them not,
But grant them, Hrothgar, gracious hearing.
In armor clad, they claim respect
Of choicest earls; but chiefly their lord 50
Who lately hither hath led his comrades."

VI

Hrothgar's Welcome to Beowulf

Hrothgar spoke, the Scyldings' protector:
"Beowulf I knew in his boyhood days;
His aged father was Ecgtheow named.
To him, to take home, did Hrethel give
His only daughter. Their dauntless son 5
Now comes to my court in quest of a friend.
My sea-faring men whom I sent afar
To the land of the Jutes, with generous gifts,
In token of friendship, have told me this,
That the power of his grip was so great it
equalled 10

The strength of thirty stout-armed thanes.
Him bold in battle, the blessed God
Hath sent in his mercy, to save our people
— So I hope in my heart — from the horror
of Grendel.

I shall offer him gold for his gallant spirit. 15
Go now in haste, and greet the strangers;
Bid to the hall the whole of the company;
Welcome with words the warrior band,
To the home of the Danes." To the hall
door went

Wulfgar the courtly, and called them in: 20
"My master commands me this message to
give you,

The lord of the Danes your lineage knows;
Bids me to welcome you, brave-hearted
warriors,

Bound on adventure o'er the billowy main.
Ye may rise now and enter, arrayed in your
armor, 25

Covered with helmets, the king to greet.

But leave your shields, and your shafts of slaughter,

Here by the wall to await the issue."

Then rose the leader, around him his comrades,

Sturdy war-band; some waited without, 30

Bid by the bold one their battle-gear to guard.

Together they hastened where the herald led them,

Under Heorot's roof. The hero went first, Strode under helmet, till he stood by the hearth.

Beowulf spoke, his byrnie glistened, 35
His corslet chain-linked by cunning of smith-craft:

"Hail, king Hrothgar! Hygelac's thane

And kinsman am I. Known is the record

Of deeds of renown I have done in my youth.

Far in my home, I heard of this Grendel; 40

Sea-farers tell the tale of the hall:

How bare of warriors, this best of buildings

Deserted stands, when the sun goes down

And twilight deepens to dark in the sky.

By comrades encouraged, I come on this journey. 45

The best of them bade me, the bravest and wisest,

To go to thy succor, O good king Hrothgar;

For well they approved my prowess in battle,

They saw me themselves come safe from the conflict 49

When five of my foes I defeated and bound,

Beating in battle the brood of the monsters.

At night on the sea with nicors I wrestled,

Avenge the Weders, survived the sea-peril,

And crushed in my grip the grim sea-monsters

That harried my neighbors. Now I am come

To cope with Grendel in combat single, 56

And match my might against the monster, alone.

I pray thee therefore, prince of the Scyldings,

Not to refuse the favor I ask,

Having come so far, O friend of the Shield-Danes, 60

That I alone with my loyal comrades,

My hardy companions, may Heorot purge.

Moreover they say that the slaughterous fiend

In wanton mood all weapons despises.

Hence, — as I hope that Hygelac may, 65

My lord and king, be kind to me, —

Sword and buckler I scorn to bear,

Gold-adorned shield, as I go to the conflict.

With my grip will I grapple the gruesome fiend,

Foe against foe, to fight for our life. 70

And he that shall fall his faith must put
In the judgment of God. If Grendel wins,
He is minded to make his meal in the hall
Untroubled by fear, on the folk of the Jutes,
As often before he fed on the Danes. 75

No need for thee then to think of my burial.

If I lose my life, the lonely prowler

My blood-stained body will bear to his den,

Swallow me greedily, and splash with my gore

His lair in the marsh; no longer wilt then 80

Have need to find me food and sustenance.

To Hygelac send, if I sink in the battle,

This best of corslets that covers my breast,

Heirloom of Hrethel, rarest of byrnies,

The work of Weland.¹ So Wyrd will be done." 85

VII

The Feasting in Heorot and the Customs of the Hall

Hrothgar spoke, the Scyldings' defender:

"Thou hast come, dear Beowulf, to bring us help,

For the sake of friendship to fight our battles.

Fifteen lines are omitted, in which Hrothgar recounts the exploits of Beowulf's father.

Sad is my spirit and sore it grieves me

To tell to any the trouble and shame 5

That Grendel hath brought me with bitter hate,

The havoc he wrought in my ranks in the hall.

My war-band dwindles, driven by Wyrd²

Into Grendel's grasp; but God may easily

End this monster's mad career. 10

Full often they boasted, my beer-bold warriors,

Brave o'er their ale-cups, the best of my fighters,

They'd meet in the mead-hall the mighty Grendel,

End his orgies with edge of the sword.

But always the mead-hall, the morning after,

The splendid building, was blood-bespat-tered; 16

Daylight dawned on the drippings of swords;

Soiled with slaughter were sills and benches,

My liege-men perished, and left me poor. 19

Sit down to the board; unbend thy thoughts;

Speak to my men as thy mood shall prompt."

For the band of the Jutes a bench was cleared;

Room in the mead-hall was made for them all.

¹ The heroic smith of Norse legend, ² Destiny.

Then strode to their seats the strong-hearted
 heroes.
 The warriors' wants a waiting-thane served;
 Held in his hand the highly-wrought ale-
 cup,
 Poured sparkling mead, while the minstrel
 sang
 Gaily in Heorot. There was gladness of
 heroes,
 A joyous company of Jutes and of Danes. ²⁴

VIII

Unferth Taunts Beowulf

Then up spoke Unferth, Ecglað's son,
 Who sat at the feet of the Scylding ruler;
 He vented his jealousy. The journey of
 Beowulf,
 His sea-adventure, sorely displeased him.
 It filled him with envy that any other ⁵
 Should win among men more war-like glory,
 More fame under heaven than he himself:
 "Art thou the Beowulf that battled with
 Brecca,
 Far out at sea, when ye swam together,
 What time you two made trial of the billows,
 Risking your lives in reckless folly, ¹¹
 On the open sea? None might dissuade you,
 Friend nor foe, from the fool-hardy venture,
 When straight from the shore you struck for
 the open,
 Breasted the waves and beat with your arms
 The mounting billows, measured the sea-
 paths ¹⁶
 With lusty strokes. Stirred was the ocean
 By wintry storms. Seven days and nights
 Your sea-strife lasted; at length he beat you,
 His strength was the better; at break of day
 He made the beach where the Battle-Reamas
 Dwell by the shore; and straightway returned
 To his people beloved in the land of the
 Brondings, ²³
 Where liegemen and towns and treasure were
 his.
 In sooth I say, the son of Beanstan ²⁵
 His boast against thee made good to the full.
 But now I ween a worse fate awaits thee,
 Though thy mettle be proved in many a battle
 And grim encounter, if the coming of Grendel
 Thou darest abide, in the dead of the night."
 Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow: ³¹
 "What a deal of stuff thou hast talked about
 Brecca,
 Garrulous with drink, my good friend Un-
 ferth.
 Thou hast lauded his deeds. Now listen to
 me!

More sea-strength had I, more ocean-
 endurance, ³⁵
 Than any man else, the wide earth round.
 'Tis true we planned in the pride of our youth
 This ocean-adventure, and vowed we would
 risk
 Our lives in the deep, each daring the other.
 We were both of us boys, but our boast we
 fulfilled. ⁴⁰
 Our naked swords as we swam from the land,
 We held in our grasp, to guard against
 whales.
 Not a stroke could he gain on me, strive as
 he would,
 Make swifter speed through the swelling
 waves,
 Nor could I in swimming o'ercome him at
 sea. ⁴⁵
 Side by side in the surge we labored
 Five nights long. At last we were parted
 By furious seas and a freezing gale.
 Night fell black; the norther wild ⁴⁹
 Rushed on us ruthless and roughened the sea.
 Now was aroused the wrath of the monsters,
 But my war-proof ring-mail, woven and
 hand-locked,
 Served me well 'gainst the sea-beasts' fury;
 The close-linked battle-net covered my
 breast.
 I was dragged to the bottom by a blood-
 thirsty monster, ⁵⁵
 Firm in his clutch the furious sea-beast
 Helpless held me. But my hand came free,
 And my foe I pierced with point of my sword.
 With my battle-blade good 'twas given me to
 kill ⁵⁹
 The dragon of the deep, by dint of my blow."

IX

*Beowulf Completes the Story of his Swimming
 Adventure with Brecca. Hrothgar's
 Departure from the Hall*

"Thus sore beset me sea-beasts thronging,
 Murderous man-eaters. I met their charges,
 Gave them their due with my goodly blade.
 They failed of their fill, the feast they ex-
 pected
 In circle sitting on the sea-floor together ⁵
 With me for their meal. I marred their
 pleasure.
 When morning came, they were cast ashore
 By the wash of the waves; their wounds
 proved fatal,
 Bloating and dead on the beach they lay.
 No more would they cross the course of the
 ships, ¹⁰

In the chop of the channel charge the sailors.
Day broke in the east, bright beacon of
God;

The sea fell smooth. I saw bold headlands,
Windy walls; for Wyrð oft saveth
A man not doomed, if he dauntless prove. 15
My luck did not fail me, my long sword
finished

Nine of the nicors. Ne'er have I heard
Of fiercer battle fought in the night,
Of hero more harried by horrors at sea.
Yet I saved my life from the sea-beasts'
clutch. 20

Worn with the struggle, I was washed ashore
In the realm of the Finns by the run of the
tide,

The heave of the flood. I have failed to hear
Of like adventure laid to thee,
Battle so bitter. Brecca did never, — 25
Neither of you was known to achieve
Deed so valiant, adventure so daring,
Sword-play so nimble; not that I boast of it,
But mark me Unferth, you murdered your
brothers,

Your course of kin. The curse of hell 30
For this you will suffer, though sharp be your
wit.

In sooth I say to you, son of Ecglaſ,
Never had Grendel such grim deeds wrought,
Such havoc in Heorot, so harried your king
With bestial fury, if your boasted courage 35
In deeds as well as in words you had proved.
But now he has found he need not fear
Vengeance fierce from the Victory-Scyldings,
Ruthless attack in return for his raids.
He takes his toll of your tribe as he pleases,
Sparing none of your spearmen proud. 41
He ravens and rages and recks not the Dane
folk,

Safe from their sword-play. But soon I will
teach him

How the Jute-folk fight. Then freely may go
To the mead-hall who likes, when the light of
morning, 45

The next day's dawn, the dark shall dispel,
And the heaven-bright sun from the south
shall shine."

Glad in his heart was the giver of rings,
Hoped to have help, the hoar-headed king; 49
The Shield-Danes' shepherd was sure of relief,
When he found in Beowulf so firm a resolve.
There was laughter of heroes. Loud was
their revelry,

Words were winsome, as Wealhtheow rose,
Queen of Hrothgar, heedful of courtesy,
Gold-adorned greeted the guests in the hall.
First to her lord, the land-defender, 56

The high-born lady handed the cup;
Bade him be gleeful and gay at the board,
And good to his people. Gladly he took it,
Quaffed from the beaker, the battle-famed
king. 60

Then leaving her lord, the lady of the Helm-
ings

Passed among her people in each part of the
hall,

Offered the ale-cup to old and young,
Till she came to the bench where Beowulf
sat.

The jewel-laden queen in courteous manner
Beowulf greeted; to God gave thanks, 66
Wise in her words, that her wish was granted,
That at last in her trouble a trusted hero
Had come for comfort. The cup received 69
From Wealhtheow's hand the hardy warrior,
And made this reply, his mind on the battle;
Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecglaſ:

"I made up my mind when my mates and I
Embarked in our boat, outbound on the
sea,

That fully I'd work the will of thy people, 75
Or fall in the fight, in the clutch of the fiend.
I surely shall do a deed of glory,
Worthy an earl, or end my days,
My morning of life, in the mead-hall here."
His words pleased well the wife of Hrothgar,
The Jutish lord's boast. The jewelled queen
Went to sit by the side of her lord. 82

Renewed was the sound of noisy revel,
Wassail of warriors. Brave words were
spoken.

Mirth in the mead-hall mounted high, 85
Till Healfdene's son ' the sign did give
That he wished to retire. Full well he knew
The fiend would find a fight awaiting him,
When the light of the sun had left the hall,
And creeping night should close upon them,
And shadowy shapes come striding on 91
Dim through the dark. The Danes arose.
Hrothgar again gave greeting to Beowulf,
Wished him farewell; the wine-hall lofty
He left in his charge. These last words
spoke he: 95

"Never before have I fully entrusted
To mortal man this mighty hall,
Since arm and shield I was able to lift.
To thee alone I leave it now,
To have and to hold it. Thy hardihood
prove! 100

Be mindful of glory; keep watch for the
foe!

No reward shalt thou lack if thou live through
this fight."

1 Hrothgar.

X

Beowulf's Watch in Heorot

Then Hrothgar went with his warrior-band,
The Arm-of-the-Scyldings, out of the hall.
Would the war-lord Wealhtheow seek,
The queen for his bed-mate. The best of
kings

Had placed in the hall, so heroes report, 5
A watch against Grendel, to guard his house,
Deliverance bring to the land of the Danes.
But the lord of the Jutes, joyfully trusted
In the might of his arm and the mercy of
God.

Off he stripped his iron byrnie, 10
Helmet from head, and handed his sword,
Choicest of blades, to his body-thane,
And bade him keep the battle armor.
Then made his boast once more the war-
rior,

Beowulf the bold, ere his bed he sought, 15
Summoned his spirit; "Not second to
Grendel

In combat I count me and courage of war.
But not with the sword will I slay this
foeman,

Though light were the task to take his life.
Nothing at all does he know of such fighting,
Of hewing of shields, though shrewd be his
malice 21

Ill deeds to contrive. We two in the night
Shall do without swords, if he dare to meet
me

In hand to hand battle. May the holy Lord
To one or the other award the victory, 25
As it seems to Him right, Ruler all-wise."
Then he sought his bed. The bolster re-
ceived

The head of the hero. In the hall about
him,

Stretched in sleep, his sailormen lay.
Not one of them thought he would ever
return 30

Home to his country, nor hoped to see
His people again, and the place of his birth.
They had heard of too many men of the
Danes

O'ertaken suddenly, slain without warning,
In the royal hall. But the Ruler on High 35
Through the woof of fate to the Wederfolk
gave

Friendship and help, their foes to o'ercome,
By a single man's strength to slay the
destroyer.

Thus all may learn that the Lord Almighty
Wields for aye the Wyrds of men. 40

XI

Beowulf's Fight with Grendel

Now Grendel came, from his crags of mist
Across the moor; he was curst of God.
The murderous prowler meant to surprise
In the high-built hall his human prey.
He stalked neath the clouds, till steep before
him 5

The house of revelry rose in his path,
The gold-hall of heroes, the gaily adorned.
Hrothgar's home he had hunted full often,
But never before had he found to receive him
So hardy a hero, such hall-guards there. 10
Close to the building crept the slayer,
Doomed to misery. The door gave way,
Though fastened with bolts, when his fist
fell on it.

Maddened he broke through the breach he
had made;

Swoln with anger and eager to slay, 15
The ravening fiend o'er the bright-paved
floor

Furious ran, while flashed from his eyes
An ugly glare like embers aglow. *swirl*
He saw in the hall, all huddled together,
The heroes asleep. Then laughed in his
heart 20

The hideous fiend; he hoped ere dawn
To sunder body from soul of each;
He looked to appease his lust of blood,
Glut his maw with the men he would slay.
But Wyrd had otherwise willed his doom; 25
Never again should he get a victim
After that night. Narrowly watched
Hygelac's thane how the horrible slayer
Forward should charge in fierce attack.
Nor was the monster minded to wait: 30
Sudden he sprang on a sleeping thane,
Ere he could stir, he slit him open;
Bit through the bone-joints, gulped the
blood,

Greedily bolted the body piecemeal. 34
Soon he had swallowed the slain man wholly,
Hands and feet. Then forward he hastened,
Sprang at the hero, and seized him at rest:
Fiercely clutched him with fiendish claw.
But quickly Beowulf caught his forearm,
And threw himself on it with all his weight.
Straight discovered that crafty plotter, 41
That never in all midearth had he met
In any man a mightier grip.

Gone was his courage, and craven fear
Sat in his heart, yet helped him no sooner. 45
Fain would he hide in his hole in the fen-
land,

His devil's den. A different welcome
From former days he found that night!

Now Hygelac's thane, the hardy, remem-
bered
His evening's boast, and bounding up, 50
Grendel he clenched, and cracked his fingers;
The monster tried flight, but the man pur-
sued;
The ravager hoped to wrench himself free,
And gain the fen, for he felt his fingers
Helpless and limp in the hold of his foe. 55
'Twas a sorry visit the man-devourer
Made to the Hall of the Hart that night.
Dread was the din, the Danes were frightened
By the uproar wild of the ale-spilling fray.
The hardest blenched as the hall-foes
wrestled 60
In terrible rage. The rafters groaned;
'Twas wonder great that the wine-hall stood,
Firm 'gainst the fighters' furious onslaught,
Nor fell to the ground, that glorious building.
With bands of iron 'twas braced and stiffened
Within and without. But off from the sill 66
Many a mead-bench mounted with gold
Was wrung where they wrestled in wrath
together.
The Scylding nobles never imagined
That open attack, or treacherous cunning, 70
Could wreck or ruin their royal hall,
The lofty and antlered, unless the flames
Should some day swallow it up in smoke.
The din was renewed, the noise redoubled; 74
Each man of the Danes was mute with dread,
That heard from the wall the horrible wall,
The gruesome song of the goddess foe,
His howl of defeat, as the fiend of hell
Bemoaned his hurt. The man held fast;
Greatest he was in grip of strength, 80
Of all that dwelt upon earth that day.

XII

The Defeat of Grendel

Loath in his heart was the hero-deliverer
To let escape his slaughterous guest.
Of little use that life he deemed
To human kind. The comrades of Beowulf
Unsheathe their weapons to ward their
leader, 5
Eagerly brandished their ancient blades,
The life of their peerless lord to defend.
Little they deemed, those dauntless war-
riors,
As they leaped to the fray, those lusty fight-
ers,
Laying on boldly to left and to right, 10
Eager to slay, that no sword upon earth,
No keenest weapon, could wound that mon-
ster:

Point would not pierce, he was proof against
iron;
'Gainst victory-blades the devourer was
charmed.
But a woful end awaited the wretch, 15
That very day he was doomed to depart,
And fare afar to the fiends' domain.

Now Grendel found, who in former days
So many a warrior had wantonly slain,
In brutish lust, abandoned of God, 20
That the frame of his body was breaking at
last.

Keen of courage, the kinsman of Hygelac
Held him grimly gripped in his hands.
Loath was each to the other alive.
The grisly monster got his death-wound: 25
A huge split opened under his shoulder;
Crunched the socket, cracked the sinews,
Glory great was given to Beowulf.
But Grendel escaped with his gaping wound,
O'er the dreary moor his dark den sought, 30
Crawled to his lair. 'Twas clear to him then,
The count of his hours to end had come,
Done were his days. The Danes were glad,
The hard fight was over, they had their desire.
Cleared was the hall, 'twas cleansed by the
hero 35
With keen heart and courage, who came
from afar.

The lord of the Jutes rejoiced in his work,
The deed of renown he had done that night.
His boast to the Danes he bravely fulfilled;
From lingering woe delivered them all; 40
From heavy sorrow they suffered in heart;
From dire distress they endured so long;
From toil and from trouble. This token
they saw:

The hero had laid the hand of Grendel
Both arm and claws, the whole forequarter 45
With clutches huge, 'neath the high-peaked
roof.

XIII

The Celebration of the Victory and the Song of the Gleeman

When morning arrived, so runs the report,
Around the gift-hall gathered the warriors;
The folk-leaders fared from far and near,
The wide ways o'er, the wonder to view,
The wild beast's foot-prints. Not one of
them felt 5
Regret that the creature had come to grief,
When they traced his retreat by the tracks on
the moor;
Marked where he wearily made his way,

Harried and beaten, to the haunt of the
 nicors,
 Slunk to the water, to save his life. 10
 There they beheld the heaving surges,
 Billows abrim with bloody froth,
 Dyed with gore, where the gruesome fiend,
 Stricken and doomed, in the struggle of death
 Gave up his ghost in the gloom of the mere,
 His heathen soul for hell to receive it. 16
 Then from the mere the thanes turned back,
 Men and youths from the merry hunt,
 Home they rode on their horses gray,
 Proudly sitting their prancing steeds. 20
 Beowulf's prowess was praised by all.
 They all agreed that go where you will,
 'Twixt sea and sea, at the south or the north,
 None better than he, no braver hero,
 None worthier honor could ever be found, 25
 (They meant no slight to their master and
 lord,
 The good king Hrothgar their ruler kind.)

Now and again the noble chiefs
 Gave rein to their steeds, and spurred them
 to race,
 Galloped their grays where the ground was
 smooth. 30
 Now and again a gallantthane,
 Whose mind was stored with many a lay,
 With songs of battle and sagas old,
 Bound new words in well-knit bars,
 Told in verse the valor of Beowulf, 35
 Matched his lines and moulded his lay.

Here is introduced an episode of the Nibelungen Legend. The gleeman tells how Sigmund the Volsung, with his son and nephew Fitela, ranged the forests and slew wild beasts. Later, when Fitela was no longer with him, Sigmund killed a dragon and won a great treasure.

When the lay was ended, they urged once
 more
 Their racers fleet to fly o'er the plain.
 As the morning sped, and the sun climbed
 higher,
 Many went in, the marvellous sight 40
 More closely to scan. The king himself,
 With a troop of trusty retainers about him,
 Strode from his bower; the bestower-of-rings
 Came, and with him the queen, in state,
 The meadow-path trod, by her maidens
 attended. 45

XIV

Hrothgar's Praise of Beowulf, and Beowulf's Reply

Hrothgar spoke when he reached the hall,
 Stood on the step, and stared at the roof
 Adorned with gold, and Grendel's hand:

"Prompt be my heart to praise the Almighty
 For the sight I behold. Much harm have I
 suffered, 5
 And grief from Grendel, but God still works
 Wonder on wonder, the Warden of Glory.
 But a little while since, I scarcely dared,
 As long as I lived to look for escape
 From my burden of sorrow, when blood-
 stained stood, 10
 And dripping with slaughter, this stately hall.
 Wide-spread woe my warriors scattered;
 They never hoped this house to rid,
 While life should last, this land-mark of
 people,
 Of demons and devils. 'Tis done by the
 hero. 15
 By the might of the Lord this man has fin-
 ished
 The feat that all of us failed to achieve
 By wit or by war. And well may she say,
 — Whoever she be, — that bore this son,
 That the Ancient of Days dealt with her
 graciously, 20
 And blest her in child-birth. Now Beowulf,
 hear!
 I shall henceforth hold thee, hero beloved,
 As child of my own, and cherish thee fondly
 In kinship new. Thou shalt never lack
 Meed of reward that is mine to give. 25
 For deeds less mighty have I many times
 granted
 Fullest reward to warriors feebler,
 In battle less brave. Thy boldness and
 valor
 Afar shall be known; thy fame shall live
 To be great among men. Now God the Al-
 mighty 30
 With honor reward thee, as ever he doth."

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow
 "Gladly we fought this good fight through,
 Fearlessly faced the foe inhuman, 34
 Grappled him gruesome; it grieves me sore
 That the man-beast himself you may not see,
 Dead in the hall, fordone in the fray.
 I meant to master the monster quickly,
 To his death-bed pin him by power of my
 grip,
 Hold him hard till my hand could strangle
 him, 40
 Bringing him low, but he broke away.
 In vain I tried to prevent his escape.
 The Lord was unwilling; I lost my hold
 On the man-destroyer; too strong was the
 monster, 44
 Too swift on his feet. But to save his life
 He left behind him the whole of his fore-paw,
 Arm and shoulder. 'Twas a useless shift,

Profiting nothing. He ne'er will prolong
His life by the loss, the loathly slayer,
Sunk in sin; but sorrow holds him, 50
Caught in the grasp of its grip relentless,
In woful bonds to await in anguish,
Guilty wretch, the rest of his doom,
As the Lord Almighty shall mete it to him."

More silent seemed the son of Ecglaf,¹ 55
Less boastful in bragging of brave deeds
done,
When all of them, looking aloft, beheld
The hand on high, where it hung 'neath the
roof,
The claw of the fiend; each finger was armed
With a steel-like spur instead of a nail, 60
The heathen's handspikes, the horrible paw
Of the evil fiend. They all declared
No iron blade could e'er have bit
On the monstrous bulk of the man-beast's
hide,
Or hewn away that woful talon. 65

XV

The Feasting and Giving of Treasure in the Hall

Now orders were given the guest-hall to
cleanse,
And furnish it fresh. Forth went hurrying
Men and maids. To the mead-hall they
went
And busily worked. Woven tapestries,
Glinting with gold, hung gay on the walls, 5
Marvellous wonders for men to look upon.
Ruin and wreck had been wrought in the
building,
Though braced within by iron bands,
The hinges were wrenched, the roof alone
stood
Undamaged and sound, when the sin-spotted
wretch, 10
The demon destroyer, in despair of his life,
Turned and made off, — not easy it is
To escape from death, essay it who will.
(So each of us all to his end must come,
Forced by fate to his final abode 15
Where his body, stretched on the bier of
death,
Shall rest after revel.) Now right was the
hour

For Healfdene's heir to enter the hall;
The king himself would come to the feast.
I never have heard of nobler bearing 20
'Mongst ranks of liegemen surrounding their
lord

¹ Unferth

As they took their seats, the trusty com-
rades,
And fell to feasting. Freely quaffed
Many a mead-cup the mighty kinsmen,
Hrothgar and Hrothulf, the high hall within.
Heorot was filled with a friendly host. 26
(Far was the day when the Scylding host
Should treachery plot, betraying each other.)
Then Healfdene's son bestowed on Beowulf
A gold-adorned banner for battle-reward, 30
A rich-brodered standard, breast-plate and
helmet.

The swordmen assembled saw the treasures
Borne before the hero. Beowulf drank
The health of Hrothgar, nor had reason to
feel

Ashamed before shieldmen to show his re-
ward. 35

Never were offered by earls that I heard of,
In token of friendship four such treasures,
Never was equalled such ale-bench bounty.
Round the ridge of the helmet a rim of iron,
Wound with wire, warded the head, 40
That the offspring of files, with fearful stroke,
The hard-tempered sword-blade, might harm
it not,

When fierce in the battle the foemen should
join.

At a sign from the king, eight stallions proud,
Bitted and bridled, were brought into hall. 45
On the back of one was a wondrous saddle,
Bravely wrought and bordered with jewels,
The battle-seat bold of the best of kings,
When Hrothgar himself would ride to the
sword-play.

(Nor flinched from the foe the famous war-
rior 50
In the front of the fight where fell the slain.)
To the hero delivered the lord of the Scyld-
ings,

The heir of Ing, both armor and horses,
Gave them to Beowulf, and bade him enjoy
them.

Thus royally, the ruler famous, 55
The heroes' hoard-guard, heaped his bounty;
Repaid the struggle with steeds and trophies,
Praised by all singers who speak the truth.

XVI

The King's Gifts to Beowulf's Men, and the Gleeman's Lay of Finn

The Lord of the earls then added gifts,
At the mead-bench remembered the men,
each one,
That Beowulf brought o'er the briny deep,
With ancient heirlooms and offered to pay

In gold for the man that Grendel had slain,
 As more of them surely the monster had
 killed 6
 Had not holy God and the hero's courage
 Averted their doom. (So daily o'errules
 The Father Almighty the fortunes of men.
 Therefore is insight ever the best, 10
 And prudence of mind; for much shall suffer
 Of lief and of loath who long endures
 The days of his life in labor and toil.)
 Now music and song were mingled together,
 In the presence of Hrothgar, ruler in war. 15
 Harp was struck and hero-lays told.
 Along the mead-bench the minstrel spread
 Cheer in hall, when he chanted the lay
 Of the sudden assault on the sons of Finn.

The episode which follows alludes obscurely to details of a feud between Frisians and Danes. The Finnsburg fragment contains a portion of the same story; and one of the heroes, Hnaef, is also mentioned in Widsith.

XVII

The Lay of Finn Ended. The Speech of the Queen

The lay was ended,
 The gleeman's song. Sound of revelry
 Rose again. Gladness brightened
 Along bench and board. Beer-thanes poured
 From flagons old the flowing wine. 5
 Wealththeow the queen walked in state,
 Under her crown, where uncle and nephew
 Together sat, — they still were friends.
 There too sat Unferth, trusted counsellor,
 At Hrothgar's feet; though faith he had
 broken 10
 With his kinsmen in battle, his courage was
 proved.
 Then the queen of the Scyldings spoke these
 words:
 "Quaff of this cup my king and my lord,
 Gold-friend of men. To thy guests be kind,
 To the men of the Jutes be generous with
 gifts. 15
 Far and near thou now hast peace.
 I have heard thou dost wish the hero for
 son,
 To hold as thy own, now Heorot is cleansed,
 The jewel-bright hall. Enjoy while thou
 mayest,
 Allotment of wealth, and leave to thy heirs 20
 Kingdom and rule when arrives the hour
 That hence thou shalt pass to thy place ap-
 pointed.
 Well I know that my nephew Hrothulf
 Will cherish in honor our children dear,
 If thou leavest before him this life upon
 earth; 25

He will surely requite the kindness we
 showed him,
 Faithfully tend our two young sons,
 When to mind he recalls our care and affec-
 tion,
 How we helped him and housed him when *he*
 was a child."
 She turned to the bench where her two boys
 sat, 30
 Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the rest of the
 youth,
 A riotous band, and right in their midst,
 Between the two brothers, Beowulf sat.

XVIII

The Queen's Gifts to Beowulf

With courteous bow the cup she offered,
 Greeted him graciously and gave him to boot
 Two armlets rare of twisted gold,
 A robe and rings, and the rarest collar;
 A better was never known among men, 5
 Since Hama brought to his bright-built hall
 The jewelled necklace, the gem of the Bris-
 ings.¹
 Before the warriors Wealththeow spoke:
 "Accept, dear Beowulf, this bright-gemmed
 collar;
 Make happy use of this heirloom jewelled, 10
 This ring and robe and royal treasure;
 Be brave and bold. My boys instruct
 In gentle manners; mine be the praise.
 Thou hast done such a deed that in days to
 come
 Men will proclaim thy might and valor 15
 To the ends of the earth, where the ocean-
 wave
 Washes the windy walls of the land.
 I wish thee joy of thy jewelled treasure,
 Long be thy life; enlarge thy prosperity,
 Show thee a friend to my sons in deed. 20
 Here each earl to the other is faithful,
 True to his liege-lord, loyal and kind.
 My warriors obey me, willing and prompt.
 The Danes carousing, do as I bid.'
 She went to her seat, the wine flowed free;
 'Twas a glorious feast. The fate that im-
 pend- 26
 None of them knew, though near to them all.

When darkness came, the king of the Danes
 Went to his rest in the royal bower;
 But a throng of his kinsmen kept the hall 30

Lines 1200-1214 interrupt the narrative to tell of the subsequent history of Wealththeow's gift; how Beowulf gave it to Hygelac, who wore it on his famous raid against the Frisians, in which he was slain by the Franks.

1 This necklace belonged to the goddess Freyja.

As they used to do in the days of old.
 They cleared the boards and covered the floor
 With beds and bolsters. One beer-thane there
 Lay down to sleep with his doom upon him.
 They placed by their heads their polished
 shields, 35

Their battle-boards bright, on the bench
 nearby.

Above each earl, within easy reach,
 Was his helmet high and his harness of mail
 And the spear-shaft keen. 'Twas their cus-
 tom so, 39

That always at rest they were ready for war
 At home or abroad, where'er they might be,
 At what hour soever for aid might call
 Their lord and king; they were comrades true.

END OF THE FIRST ADVENTURE

XIX

The Coming of Grendel's Dam to Avenge her Son

Then sank they to sleep, but sorely paid
 One poor wretch for his sleep that night.
 The same thing fell, as in former days
 When Grendel his raids on the gold-hall
 made,

Before the fiend had found his match, 5
 Caught in his sins. 'Twas seen that night
 An avenger survived the villainous fiend,
 Although they had ceased from their sorrow
 and care.

'Twas Grendel's mother, a monstrous hag.
 She remembered her loss. She had lived in
 the deep, 10

In a water-hell cold, since Cain had become
 The evil slayer of his only brother,
 His kin by blood; accused he fled,
 Marked by murder, from men's delights,
 Haunted the wilds; from him there sprung 15
 Ghastly demon-shapes, Grendel was one.

The omitted lines break the narrative to turn back to the Grendel fight.

Now grim and vengeful

His mother set out on her errand of woe,
 Damage to wreak for the death of her son.
 Arrived at Heorot, the Ring-Danes she found
 Asleep in the hall. Soon was to come 21
 Surprise to the earls, when into the hall
 Burst Grendel's dam. (Less grim was the
 terror,

As terror of woman in war is less,
 — The fury of maidens, than full-armed
 men's, 25

When the blood-stained war-blade with wire-
 bound hilt,

Hard and hammer-forged, hurtling through
 air

Hews the boar from the helmet's crest.)
 Many the swords that were suddenly drawn,
 Blades from the benches; buckler and shield
 Were tightly grasped; no time for the hel-
 met, 31

For harness of mail, when the horror was on
 them.

The monster was minded to make for the
 open;

Soon as discovered, she sought to escape.
 Quickly she seized a sleeping warrior, 35
 Fast in her clutch to the fens she dragged
 him.

He was to Hrothgar of heroes the dearest,
 Most trusted of liegemen between the two
 seas,

Comrade the nearest, killed in his sleep,
 The bravest in battle. Nor was Beowulf
 there, 40

They had elsewhere quartered the earl that
 night,

After the giving of gifts in the hall.
 There was shouting in Heorot; the hand she
 seized,

The bloody talon, she took away.
 Sorrow was renewed in the nearby dwellings,
 Bad was the bargain that both had made 46
 To pay for their friends with further lives
 lost.

With grief overcome was the gray-haired
 king,

When he learned that his thane was alive no
 more,

His dearest comrade by death o'ertaken; 50
 Quick from his bower was Beowulf fetched,
 The hero brave. At break of dawn,
 He with his comrades came to the place
 Where the king in sorrow was waiting to see
 Whether God the Wielder of All would grant
 him 55

A turn in his tide of trouble and woe.
 Then entered the room the ready hero;
 With his band of brave men the boards re-
 sounded.

He eagerly greeted the aged ruler,
 Delayed not to ask the lord of the Ingwines
 If his night had passed in peace and quiet. 61

XX

Hrothgar Describes the Haunt of the Monster and Asks Beowulf to Undertake a Second Adventure

Hrothgar spoke, the Scylding defender:
 "Speak not of peace for pain is renewed

'Mongst all the Danes. Dead is Æschere,
Elder brother of Irmenlaf,
My comrade true and counsellor trusted, 5
My right-hand friend when in front of the
combat

We stood shoulder to shoulder, when shield-
burg broke,

And boar-crests crashed in battle together.
Earls should ever like Æschere be.

On Heorot's floor he was foully slain 10
By warlock wild. I wot not whither
The prey-proud fury hath fled to cover,

Glutted and gorged. With gruesome claws
And violence fierce she avenged thy deed,

The slaying of Grendel her son last night, 15
Because too long my loyal thanes
He had hunted and hurt. In the hall he fell,

His life was forfeit. To the fray returned
Another as cruel, her kin to avenge;

Faring from far, the feud re-opened. 20
Hence many a thane shall mourn and think
Of the giver of gifts with grief renewed,

And heart-woe heavy. The hand lies low
That fain would have helped and defended
you all.

I have heard my people, the peasant folk 25
Who house by the border and hold the fens,
Say they have seen two creatures strange,

Huge march-stalkers, haunting the moor-
land,

Wanderers outcast. One of the two
Seemed to their sight to resemble a woman;

The other manlike, a monster misshapen, 31
But huger in bulk than human kind,
Trod an exile's track of woe.

The folk of the fen in former days
Named him Grendel. Unknown his father,

Or what his descent from demons obscure. 36
Lonely and waste is the land they inhabit,
Wolf-cliffs wild and windy headlands,

Ledges of mist, where mountain torrents
Downward plunge to dark abysses, 40

And flow unseen. Not far from here
O'er the moorland in miles, a mere expands:

Spray-frosted trees o'erspread it, and hang
O'er the water with roots fast wedged in the

rocks.

There nightly is seen, beneath the flood, 45
A marvellous light. There lives not the man
Has fathomed the depth of the dismal mere.

Though the heather-stepper, the strong-
horned stag,

Seek this cover, forspent with the chase, 49
Tracked by the hounds, he will turn at bay,
To die on the brink ere he brave the plunge,

Hide his head in the haunted pool.
Wan from its depths the waves are dashed,

When wicked storms are stirred by the wind,

And from sullen skies descends the rain. 55
In thee is our hope of help once more.

Not yet thou hast learned where leads the
way

To the lurking-hole of this hatcher of out-
rage.

Seek, if thou dare, the dreaded spot!
Richly I pay thee for risking this fight, 60

With heirlooms golden and ancient rings,
As I paid thee before, if thou come back
alive."

XXI

The Arrival of Hrothgar and Beowulf at Grendel's Mere

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
"Sorrow not, gray-beard, nor grieve o'er thy
friend!

Vengeance is better than bootless mourning.
To each of us here the end must come

Of life upon earth: let him who may 5
Win glory ere death. I deem that best,
The lot of the brave, when life is over.

Rise, O realm-ward, ride we in haste,
To track the hag that whelped this Grendel.

I tell thee in truth, she may turn where she
will, 10

No cave of ocean nor cover of wood,
No hole in the ground shall hide her from me.

But one day more thy woe endure,
And nurse thy hope as I know thou wilt."

Sprang to his feet the sage old king, 15
Gave praise to God for the promise spoken.
And now for Hrothgar a horse was bridled,

A curly-maned steed. The king rode on,
Bold on his charger. A band of shield-men

Followed on foot. Afar they saw 20
Footprints leading along the forest.

They followed the tracks, and found she had
crossed

Over the dark moor, dragging the body
Of the goodliest thane that guarded with

Hrothgar

Heorot Hall, and the home of the king. 25
The well-born hero held the trail;

Up rugged paths, o'er perilous ridges,
Through passes narrow, an unknown way,

By beetling crags, and caves of the nicors.
With a chosen few he forged ahead, 30

Warriors skilled, to scan the way.
Sudden they came on a cluster of trees

Overhanging a hoary rock,
A gloomy grove; and gurgling below,

A stir of waters all stained with blood. 35
Sick at heart were the Scylding chiefs,
Many a thane was thrilled with woe,

For there they beheld the head of Æschere
Far beneath at the foot of the cliff.
They leaned and watched the waters boil 40
With bloody froth. The band sat down,
While the war-horn sang its summons to
battle.

They saw in the water sea-snakes a many,
Wave-monsters weird, that wallowed about.
At the base of the cliff lay basking the nicors,
Who oft at sunrise ply seaward their jour-
ney, 46
To hunt on the ship-trails and scour the
main,

Sea-beasts and serpents. Sudden they fled,
Wrathful and grim, aroused by the hail
Of the battle-horn shrill. The chief of the
Jutes, 50

With a bolt from his bow a beast did sunder
From life and sea-frolic; sent the keen shaft
Straight to his vitals. Slow he floated,
Upturned and dead at the top of the waves.
Eager they boarded their ocean-quarry; 55
With barb-hooked boar-spears the beast they
gaffed,

Savagely broached him and brought him to
shore,

Wave-plunger weird. The warriors viewed
The grisly stranger. But straightway Beo-
wulf 59

Donned his corslet nor cared for his life. . .

Lines 1443-1472 break the narrative with a description
of Beowulf's armor and the sword Hrunting, lent him by
Unferth.

XXII

Beowulf's Fight with Grendel's Dam

To Hrothgar spoke the son of Ecgtheow:
"Remember O honored heir of Healfdene,
Now that I go, thou noble king,
Warriors' gold-friend, what we agreed on,
If I my life should lose in thy cause, 5
That thou wouldst stand in stead of my
father,

Fulfil his office when I was gone.
Be guardian, thou, to my thanes and kins-
men,

My faithful friends, if I fail to return.
To Hygelac send, Hrothgar beloved, 10
The goodly gifts thou gavest to me.
May the lord of the Jutes, when he looks on
this treasure,

May Hrethel's son, when he sees these gifts,
Know that I found a noble giver,
And joyed, while I lived, in a generous lord.
This ancient heirloom to Unferth give, 16
To the far-famed warrior, my wondrous
sword

Of matchless metal, I must with Hrunting¹
Glory gain, or go to my death."

After these words the Weder-Jute lord 20
Sprang to his task, nor staid for an answer.
Swiftly he sank 'neath the swirling flood;
'Twas an hour's time ere he touched the
bottom.

Soon the sea-hag, savage and wild,
Who had roamed through her watery realms
at will, 25

For winters a hundred, was 'ware from below,
An earthling had entered her ocean domain.
Quickly she reached and caught the hero;
Grappled him grimly with gruesome claws.
Yet he got no scratch, his skin was whole; 30
His battle-sark shielded his body from harm.
In vain she tried, with her crooked fingers,
To tear the links of his close-locked mail.
Away to her den the wolf-slut dragged
Beowulf the bold, o'er the bottom ooze. 35
Though eager to smite her, his arm was help-
less.

Swimming monsters swarmed about him,
Dented his mail with dreadful tusks.
Sudden the warrior was 'ware they had
come

To a sea-hall strange and seeming hostile, 40
Where water was not nor waves oppressed,
For the caverned rock all round kept back
The swallowing sea;² He saw a light,
A flicker of flame that flashed and shone.
Now first he discerned the sea-hag monstrous,
The water-wife wolfish. His weapon he
raised, 46

And struck with his sword a swinging blow.
Sang on her head the hard-forged blade
Its war-song wild. But the warrior found
That his battle-flasher refused to bite, 50
Or maim the foe. It failed its master
In the hour of need, though oft it had cloven
Helmets, and carved the casques of the
doomed

In combats fierce. For the first time now
That treasure failed him, fallen from honor.
But Hygelac's earl took heart of courage; 56
In mood defiant he fronted his foe.
The angry hero hurled to the ground,
In high disdain, the hilt of the sword,
The gaudy and jewelled; rejoiced in the
strength 60

Of his arm unaided. So all should do
Who glory would find and fame abiding,
In the crash of conflict, nor care for their
lives.

¹ The sword which Unferth lends to Beowulf.

² In the related story of the *Grettis Saga*, the cavern is
behind a waterfall which empties into the mere.

The Lord of the Battle-Jutes braved the
encounter;
The murderous hag by the hair he caught; 63
Down he dragged the dam of Grendel
In his swelling rage, till she sprawled on the
floor.

Quick to repay in kind what she got,
On her foe she fastened her fearful clutches;
Enfolded the warrior weary with fighting; 70
The sure-footed hero stumbled and fell.
As helpless he lay, she leapt on him fiercely;
Unsheathed her hip-knife, shining and broad,
Her son to avenge, her offspring sole.
But the close-linked corslet covered his
breast, 75

Foiled the stroke and saved his life.
All had been over with Ecgtheow's son,
Under the depths of the ocean vast,
Had not his harness availed to help him,
His battle-net stiff, and the strength of God.
The Ruler of battles aright decided it; 81
The Wielder all-wise awarded the victory:
Lightly the hero leaped to his feet.

XXIII

Beowulf's Victory and Return to Heorot

He spied 'mongst the arms a sword surpass-
ing,

Huge and ancient, a hard-forged slayer,
Weapon matchless and warriors' delight,
Save that its weight was more than another
Might bear into battle or brandish in war; 5
Giants had forged that finest of blades.
Then seized its chain-hilt the chief of the
Scyldings;

His wrath was aroused, reckless his mood,
As he brandished the sword for a savage
blow.

Bit the blade in the back of her neck, 10
Cut the neck-bone, and cleft its way
Clean through her flesh; to the floor she sank;
The sword was gory; glad was the hero.
A light flashed out from the inmost den,
Like heaven's candle, when clear it shines 15
From cloudless skies. He scanned the cave,
Walked by the wall, his weapon upraised;
Grim in his hand the hilt he gripped.
Well that sword had served him in battle.
Steadily onward he strode through the cave,
Ready to wreak the wrongs untold, 21
That the man-beast had wrought in the realm
of Danes. . . .

He gave him his due when Grendel he found
Stretched as in sleep, and spent with the
battle.

But dead was the fiend, the fight at Heorot 25

Had laid him low. The lifeless body
Sprang from the blows of Beowulf's sword,
As fiercely he hacked the head from the
carcass.¹

But the men who were watching the water
with Hrothgar
Suddenly saw a stir in the waves, 30
The chop of the sea all churned up with
blood

And bubbling gore. The gray-haired chiefs
For Beowulf grieved, agreeing together
That hope there was none of his home-
returning,

With victory crowned, to revisit his lord. 35
Most of them feared he had fallen prey
To the mere-wolf dread in the depths of the
sea.

When evening came, the Scyldings all
Forsook the headland, and Hrothgar himself
Turned homeward his steps. But sick at
heart 40

The strangers² sat and stared at the sea,
Hoped against hope to behold their comrade
And leader again.

Now that goodly sword
Began to melt with the gore of the monster;
In bloody drippings it dwindled away. 45
'Twas a marvellous sight: it melted like ice,
When fetters of frost the Father unlocks,
Unravels the ropes of the wrinkled ice,
Lord and Master of months and seasons.
Beheld in the hall the hero from Juteland 50
Treasures unnumbered, but naught he took,
Save Grendel's head, and the hilt of the
sword,

Bright and jewelled, — the blade had melted,
Its metal had vanished, so venomous hot
Was the blood of the demon-brute dead in
the cave. 55

Soon was in the sea the slayer of monsters;
Upward he shot through the shimmer of
waves;
Cleared was the ocean, cleansed were its
waters,

The wolfish water-hag wallowed no more;
The mere-wife had yielded her miserable life.
Swift to the shore the sailors' deliverer 61
Came lustily swimming, with sea-spoil laden;
Rejoiced in the burden he bore to the land.
Ran to meet him his mailéd comrades,
With thanks to God who gave them their
leader 65

Safe again back and sound from the deep.

¹ Beowulf dismembers Grendel's dead body so that his
ghost may not return to haunt the Hall.

² Beowulf's band of retainers.

Quickly their hero's helmet they loosened,
 Unbuckled his breastplate. The blood-
 stained waves
 Fell to a calm 'neath the quiet sky.
 Back they returned o'er the tracks with the
 footprints, 70
 Merrily measured the miles o'er the fen,
 Way they knew well, those warriors brave;
 Brought from the holm-cliff the head of the
 monster;
 'Twas toil and labor to lift the burden,
 Four of their stoutest scarce could carry it 75
 Swung from a spear-pole, a staggering
 load. . . .
 Thus the fourteen of them, thanes adven-
 turous,
 Marched o'er the moor to the mead-hall of
 Hrothgar.
 Tall in the midst of them towered the hero;
 Strode among his comrades, till they came
 to the hall. 80
 In went Beowulf, the brave and victorious,
 Battle-beast hardy, Hrothgar to greet.
 Lifting by the hair the head of Grendel,
 They laid it in the hall, where the heroes
 were carousing,
 Right before the king, and right before the
 queen; 85
 Gruesome was the sight that greeted the
 Danes.

XXIV, XXV

*Beowulf's Story of His Fight, and Hrothgar's
Counsel*

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
 "Gladly we offer this ocean-booty,
 That here thou lookest on, lord of the Scyld-
 ings,
 For sign of victory, son of Healfdene.
 Hard was the fight I fought under water; 5
 That combat nearly cost me my life.
 Soon had been ended the ocean-encounter,
 Had God in his mercy not given me aid.
 No help I got from the good blade Hrunting;
 The well-tried weapon worthless proved. 10
 By the grace of God, who guided me friend-
 less,
 A splendid old sword I spied on the wall,
 Hanging there, huge; by the hilt I grasped it,
 And seeing my chance, I struck amain
 At the sea-cave's wardens, when sudden the
 blade 15
 Melted and burned, as the blood gushed out,
 The battle-gore hot. The hilt I saved
 From the villainous fiends, and avenged their
 crimes,

The murder of the Danes, as was meet and
 due. 19
 I promise thee now, in peace thou shalt sleep
 In Heorot hall, with the whole of thy band.
 Thou and thy thanes may throng within
 As ye used of yore, both young and old.
 Thou need'st not fear renewal of strife,
 Harm to thy folk at the hands of the fiends."
 The golden hilt was given to the king; 26
 The jewelled work of the giants of old
 Came into hand of the hoary warrior.
 On the death of the demons, the Danish lord
 kept it,
 Wondersmiths' work. When the world was
 rid 30
 Of the evil fiend, the enemy of God,
 Guilty of murder, and his mother too,
 The trophy passed to the peerless lord,
 The goodliest king, that gave out treasure
 Between the two seas on Scandia's isle. 35
 Hrothgar gazed on the golden hilt,
 Relic of old, where was writ the tale
 Of a far-off fight, when the flood o'erwhelmed,
 The raging sea, the race of the giants
 (They wantonly dared to war against God; 40
 Then rose in his wrath the Ruler Eternal,
 'Neath the heaving billows buried them all.)
 On the polished gold of the guard of the hilt,
 Runes were writ that rightly told,
 To him that read them, for whom that
 weapon, 45
 Finest of sword-blades, first was made,
 The splendid hilt with serpents entwined.
 All were silent, when the son of Healfdene,
 The wise king spoke: "Well may he say,
 The aged ruler, who aye upholds 50
 Truth and right, 'mid the ranks of his people,
 Whose mind runs back to by-gone days,
 This guest is born of a goodly breed.
 Thy fame shall fly afar among men,
 Beowulf my friend, firmly thou holdest 55
 Both wisdom and might. My word will I
 keep,
 The love that I proffered. Thou shalt
 prove a deliverer
 To thy folk and followers in far-off years,
 A help to the heroes. Not Heremod thus,
 Ecgwela's heir, did offer at need 60
 His strength to the Scyldings; instead, he
 brought
 Slaughter and death on the sons of the Danes.
 Sworn with wrath he slew his comrades,
 His friends at the board and fled alone,
 Ill-famed earl, an outcast from men. 65
 Though God endowed him with gifts of
 strength,
 With boldness and might above all men,
 And prospered him greatly, yet he grew to be

Blood-thirsty and cruel. No bracelets he
gave
To the Danes as was due, but dwelt in gloom,
Reaped the reward of the woful strife, 71
And wearisome feud. Take warning from
him.

Hrothgar now delivers a long sermon to Beowulf on the dangers of pride, the fickleness of fortune, and the brevity of life, and ends by asking him to sit down to the feast, promising more gifts on the morrow.

Beowulf hastened, happy in mood,
To seek his bench as bid by the king.
Once more, as of old, for the earls in hall, 75
The famous in battle, the board was set
For feasting anew. When night with its
shadows

O'erwhelmed the world, the heroes arose.
The gray-haired ruler his rest would seek,
The Scylding his bed; and Beowulf too, 80
The lusty warrior, longed for his sleep.
Soon an attendant showed the way
To the stranger from far, spent with his
faring.

With courtly custom, he cared for his needs.
All that to warriors, overseas wandering, 85
Was due in those days, he did for the guest.
High-gabled and gold-decked, the gift-hall
towered;

The stout-hearted hero slept soundly within,
Till the raven black, with blithe heart hailed
The bliss of heaven, and bright the sun 90
Came gliding o'er earth. Then, eager to start,
The warriors wakened; they wished to set out
On their homeward journey. The hero brave
Would board his ship, and back again sail.

The hardy one bade that Hrunding be
brought 95
To the son of Ecglaf: the sword he offered
him;

Thanked him for lending the lovely weapon;
Called it a war-friend, keen in the battle;
Not a word in blame of the blade he uttered,
Great-hearted hero. Now hastened the
guests, 100

Eager to part, and armed for their voyage.
Their dauntless leader, beloved of the Danes.
Came to the high-seat, and to Hrothgar the
king

The bold-in-battle now bade farewell.

XXVI

Beowulf's Leave-Taking of Hrothgar

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
"Now we sea-farers would make known our
desire;

1 Unferth.

Far-travelled wanderers, we wish to return
To Hygelac now. A hearty welcome
We here have found, thou hast harbored us
well. 5

If ever on earth I may anyway win,
Master of men, more of thy love
Than now I have won, for another adventure
Of arms and war I am eager and willing.

If ever I hear, o'er the ocean-ways 10
That neighbor-tribes threaten annoyance or
war,

As feud-seeking foemen afore time assailed
thee,

A thousand thanes to thee will I bring,
Heroes to help thee. For Hygelac, I know,
Though young in years will yield me aid; 15
The people's Shepherd will surely help me
By word and deed to do thee service,
And bring thee spear-shafts to speed thee in
battle,

Thy might to strengthen when men thou
needest.

If ever Hrethric, heir of thy line, 20
Should come to sojourn at the court of the
Jutes,

A host of friends he will find awaiting him.
Who boasts himself brave, abroad should
travel."

The aged Hrothgar answering spoke:
"To utter these words, the All-wise Lord 25
Hath prompted thy heart; more prudent
counsel

From one in years so young as thou,
I never have heard. Thou art hardy in
strength,

And sage in spirit, and speakest well.
If ever it happen that Hrethel's heir 30
Be stricken by spear and slain in battle,
If sickness or sword assail thy lord,
And thou survive him, I think it likely

The Sea-Jutes in vain will seek for a better
As choice for their king, their chief to become
And rule o'er the thanes, if thou be willing 36
The lordship to hold. The longer I know
thee

The better I like thee, Beowulf my friend.
Thou hast brought it about that both our
peoples,

Jutes and the Spear-Danes, shall be joined in
peace. 40

They shall cease from war, the strife shall be
ended,

The feuds of aforetime, so fiercely waged.
While I rule this realm, our riches we share;
Many shall travel with treasure laden,
Each other to greet, o'er the gannet's bath; 45
O'er the rolling waves the ringed prow
Tokens of friendship shall freely bring

And bind our people in peace together,
Toward friend and foe, in faith as of old."

Still other treasures, twelve in all, 50
Healfdene's heir in the hall bestowed
On Beowulf brave, and bade him take them
And seek his people, and soon return.
Then kissed the king, of kin renowned,
The thane beloved. The lord of the Scyldings
Fell on his neck. Fast flowed the tears 56
Of the warrior gray; he weighed both chances
But held to the hope, though hoary with
years,

That each should see the other again,
And meet in the mead-hall. The man was so
dear 60
That he could not restrain the storm in his
breast.

Locked in his heart, a hidden longing
For the man he loved so, left him no peace,
And burnt in his blood. But Beowulf went;
The gold-decked hero the grass-way trod, 65
Proud of his booty. The boat awaited
Its owner and master, where at anchor it
rode.

As they went on their way, the warriors
praised

The bounty of Hrothgar, the blameless king.
None was his equal till age snatched away 70
The joy of his manhood,—no mortal it
spares.

XXVII

Beowulf's Return Voyage to Hygelac

Then came to the coast the comrades brave,
The lusty warriors, wearing their ring-nets,
Their chain-linked corslets. The coast-guard
saw them,

The same that at first had spied them com-
ing;

This time he chose not to challenge them
harshly, 5

But gave them his greeting, galloping toward
them.

Said the Weder-folk would welcome the
sight of them,

Boarding their ship in shining armor.
Then by the sands, the seaworthy craft,
The iron-ringed keel, with arms was laden, 10
With horses and treasure. On high the mast
Towered above the treasures of Hrothgar.
To the man who had waited as watchman
aboard,

Beowulf gave a gold-bound sword.
(Of on the mead-bench that heirloom pre-
cious 15

Its owner would honor.) When all had em-
barked,
They drove for the deep, from Daneland's
shore.

Then soon did the mast its sea-suit wear,
A sail was unfurled, made fast with ropes,
The sea-wood sang as she sped o'er the ocean,
No baffling head-wind hindered her course; 21
The foamy-necked floater flew o'er the bil-
lows,

The sea-craft staunch o'er the salt-sea waves,
Till they came in sight of the cliffs of Jutland
The well known capes, and the wind-driven
keel, 25

Grating the sand, stood still on the shore.
Soon was at hand the harbor-watch eager.
Long had he looked for his loved companions,
Scanning the sea for their safe return.

The broad-bosomed boat to the beach he
moored 30
With anchor-ropes fast, lest the force of the
waves

That comely craft should cast adrift.
Then Beowulf bade them bring ashore
His treasure-cargo of costly gold
And weapons fine; not far was the way 35
To Hygelac's hall, where at home he dwelt,
The king and his comrades, close by the sea.

END OF THE SECOND ADVENTURE

After the death of Hygelac and his son, Beowulf became king of the Jutes, and ruled over them fifty years. In his old age his people were harried by a fire-dragon, whom the hero went out to fight. It seems that an outlaw, banished and flying for shelter, had come upon a treasure hid in a deep cave or barrow, guarded by a dragon. Long years before, an earl, the last of his race, had buried the treasure. After his death the dragon, sniffing about the stones, had found it and guarded it three hundred years, until the banished man discovered the place, and carried off one of the golden goblets. In revenge the dragon made nightly raids on Beowulf's realm, flying through the air, spitting fire, burning houses and villages, even Beowulf's hall, the "gift-stool" of the Jutes. Beowulf had an iron shield made against the dragon's fiery breath, and with eleven companions, sought out the hill-vault near the sea. These events are related in Sections XXVIII-XXXV of the *Beowulf* MS.

XXXV

Beowulf's Fight with the Fire Dragon

Before attacking the fire-dragon, Beowulf once more, and for the last time, makes his "battle-boast" in the presence of his followers.

Beowulf said to them, brave words spoke he:
"Brunt of battles I bore in my youth,
One fight more I make this day.
I mean to win fame defending my people,
If the grim destroyer will seek me out,
Come at my call from his cavern dark."
Then he greeted his thanes each one,

For the last time hailed his helmeted warriors,
 His comrades dear. "I should carry no sword,
 No weapon of war 'gainst the worm should bear, 10
 If the foe I might slay by strength of my arm,
 As Grendel I slew long since by my hand.
 But I look to fight a fiery battle,
 With scorching puffs of poisonous breath.
 For this I bear both breastplate and shield; 15
 No foot will I flinch from the foe of the barrow.
 Wyrd is over us, each shall meet
 His doom ordained at the dragon-cliff!
 Bold is my mood, but my boast I omit
 'Gainst the battle-flier. Abide ye here, 20
 Heroes in harness, hard by the barrow,
 Cased in your armor the issue await:
 Which of us two his wounds shall survive.
 Not yours the attempt, the task is mine.
 'Tis meant for no man but me alone 25
 To measure his might 'gainst the monster fierce.
 I get you the gold in glorious fight,
 Or battle-death bitter shall bear off your lord."
 Uprose with his shield the shining hero,
 Bold 'neath his helmet. He bore his harness
 In under the cliff; alone he went, 31
 Himself he trusted; no task for faint-heart.
 Then saw by the wall the warrior brave,
 Hero of many a hard-fought battle,
 Arches of stone that opened a way; 35
 From the rocky gate there gushed a stream,
 Bubbling and boiling with battle-fire.
 So great the heat no hope was there
 To come at the hoard in the cavern's depth,
 Unscathed by the blast of the scorching 40
 dragon.
 He let from his breast his battle-cry leap,
 Swoln with rage was the royal Jute,
 Stormed the stout-heart; strong and clear
 Through the gloom of the cave his cry went
 ringing.
 Hate was aroused, the hoard-ward knew 45
 The leader's hail. Too late 'twas now
 To parley for peace. The poisonous breath
 Of the monster shot from the mouth of the
 cave,
 Reeking hot. The hollow earth rumbled.
 The man by the rock upraised his shield, 50
 The lord of the Jutes, 'gainst the loathly dragon.
 Now kindled for battle the curled-up beast;
 The king undaunted with drawn sword stood,
 ('Twas an heirloom olden with edge of light-
 ning)

Each was so fierce he affrighted the other. 55
 Towering tall 'neath tilted shield,
 Waited the king as the worm coiled back,
 Sudden to spring; so stood he and waited.
 Blazing he came in coils of fire
 Swift to his doom. The shield of iron 60
 Sheltered the hero too short a while, —
 Life and limb it less protected
 Than he hoped it would, for the weapon he
 held
 First time that day he tried in battle;
 Wyrd had not willed he should win the fight.
 But the lord of the Jutes uplifted his arm, 66
 Smote the scaly worm, struck him so fierce
 That his ancient bright-edged blade gave way,
 Bent on the bone, and bit less sure
 Than its owner had need in his hour of peril.
 That sword-stroke roused the wrath of the
 cave-guard; 71
 Fire and flame afar he spirted,
 Blaze of battle; but Beowulf there
 No victory boasted: his blade had failed him,
 Naked in battle, as never it should have, 75
 Well-tempered iron. Nor easy it was
 For Ecgtheow's heir,¹ honored and famous,
 This earth to forsake, forever to leave it;
 Yet he must go, against his will
 Elsewhere to dwell. So we all must leave 80
 This fleeting life. — Erelong the foes,
 Bursting with wrath, the battle renewed.
 The hoard-ward took heart, and with heaving
 breast
 Came charging amain. The champion brave,
 Strength of his people, was sore oppressed,
 Enfolded by flame. No faithful comrades 86
 Crowded about him, his chosen band,
 All aethelings' sons, to save their lives,
 Fled to the wood. One of them only
 Felt surging sorrow; for nought can stifle 90
 Call of kin in a comrade true;

XXXVI

*Wiglaf's Reproach to his Comrades.
 Beowulf Mortally Wounded.*

The shield-thane beloved, lord of the Scylf-
 ings,
 Wiglaf was called, 'twas Weohstan's son,
 Ælfheré's kinsman. When his king he saw
 Hard by the heat under helmet oppressed,
 He remembered the gifts he had got of old, 5
 Lands and wealth of the Waegmunding
 line,
 The folk-rights all that his father's had been;
 He could hold no longer, but hard he gripped

¹ Beowulf.

Linden shield yellow and ancient sword. . .

The intervening lines tell the history of the sword and the feuds in which it has participated.

For the first time there the faithful thane, 10
Youthful and stalwart, stood with his leader,
Shoulder to shoulder in shock of battle.

Nor melted his courage, nor cracked his
blade,

His war-sword true, as the worm found out
When together they got in grim encounter. 15

Wiglaf in wrath upbraided his comrades,
Sore was his heart as he spake these words:
"Well I mind when our mead we drank
In the princely hall, how we promised our
lord

Who gave us these rings and golden armlets,
That we would repay his war-gifts rich, 21
Helmets and armor, if haply should come
His hour of peril; us hath he made
Thanes of his choice for this adventure;
Spurred us to glory, and gave us these
treasures 25

Because he deemed us doughty spearmen,
Helmeted warriors, hardy and brave.
Yet all the while, unhelped and alone,
He meant to finish this feat of strength,
Shepherd of men and mightiest lord 30
Of daring deeds. The day is come, —
Now is the hour he needs the aid
Of spearmen good. Let us go to him now,
Help our hero while hard bestead
By the nimble flames. God knows that I 35
Had rather the fire should ruthlessly fold
My body with his, than harbor me safe.
Shame it were surely our shields to carry
Home to our lands, unless we first
Slay this foe and save the life 40
Of the Weder-king. Full well I know
To leave him thus, alone to endure,
Bereft of aid, breaks ancient right.
My helmet and sword shall serve for us both,
Shield and armor we share to-day." 45

Waded the warrior through welter and reek;
Buckler and helmet he bore to his leader;
Heartened the hero with words of hope:
"Do thy best now, dearest Beowulf,
Years ago, in youth, thou vowedst, 50
Living, ne'er to lose thine honor,
Shield thy life and show thy valor.
I stand by thee to the end!"
After these words the worm came on,
Snorting with rage, for a second charge; 55
All mottled with fire his foes he sought,
The warriors hated. But Wiglaf's shield
Was burnt to the boss by the billows of fire;
His harness helped not the hero young.

Shelter he found 'neath the shield of his kins-
man, 60

When the crackling blaze had crumbled his
own.

But mindful of glory, the mighty hero
Smote amain with his matchless sword.
Down it hurtled, driven by anger,
Till it stuck in the skull, then snapped the
blade, 65

Broken was Naegling, Beowulf's sword,
Ancient and gray. 'Twas granted him never
To count on edge of iron in battle;
His hand was too heavy, too hard his strokes,
As I have heard tell, for every blade 70
He brandished in battle: the best gave way,
And left him helpless and hard bestead.
Now for a third time neared the destroyer;
The fire-drake fierce, old feuds remembering,
Charged the warrior who wavered an instant;
Blazing he came and closed his fangs 76
On Beowulf's throat; and throbbing spirts
Of life-blood dark o'erdrrenched the hero.

XXXVII

The Slaying of the Dragon

Then in the hour of utmost peril,
The stripling proved what stock he came of;
Showed his endurance and dauntless courage.
Though burnt was his hand when he backed
his kinsman,
With head unguarded the good thane charged,
Thrust from below at the loathly dragon, 6
Pierced with the point and plunged the blade
in,
The gleaming-bright, till the glow abated
Waning low. Ere long the king
Came to himself, and swiftly drew 10
The war-knife that hung at his harness' side,
And cut in two the coiled monster.
So felled they the foe and finished him:
bravely,
Together they killed him, the kinsmen two.,
A noble pair. So needs must do 15
Comrades in peril. For the king it proved
His uttermost triumph, the end of his deeds.
And work in the world. The wound began,
Where the cave-dragon savage had sunk his
teeth,
To swell and fever, and soon he felt 20
The baleful poison pulse through his blood,
And burn in his breast. The brave old war-
rior
Sat by the wall and summoned his thoughts;
Gazed on the wondrous work of the giants:
Arches of stone, firm-set on their pillars, 25
Upheld that hill-vault hoar and ancient.

Now Beowulf's thane, the brave and faithful,
Dashed with water his darling lord,
His comrade and king, all covered with blood
And faint with the fight; unfastened his
helmet. 30

Beowulf spoke despite his hurt,
His piteous wound; full well he knew
His years on earth were ended now,
His hours of glad life, gone for aye
His days allotted, and death was near: 35
"Now would I gladly give to a son
These weapons of war, had Wyrd but granted
That heir of my own should after me come,
Sprung from my loins. This land have I
ruled

Fifty winters. No folk-king dared, 40
None of the chiefs of the neighboring tribes,
To touch me with sword or assail me with
terror

Of battle-threats. I bided at home,
Held my peace and my heritage kept,
Seeking no feuds nor swearing false oaths. 45
This gives me comfort, and gladdens me now,
Though wounded sore and sick unto death.
As I leave my life, the Lord may not charge
me.

With killing of kinsmen. Now quickly go,
Wiglaf beloved, to look at the hoard, 50
Where hidden it rests 'neath the hoary rock.
For the worm lies still, put asleep by his
wound,

Robbed of his riches. Then rise and haste!
Give me to see that golden hoard,
Gaze on the store of glorious gems, 55
The easier then I may end my life,
Leave my lordship that long I held."

XXXVIII

The Rescue of the Hoard and the Death of Beowulf

Swiftly, 'tis said, the son of Weohstan
Obeyed the words of his bleeding lord,
Maimed in the battle. Through the mouth
of the cave

Boldly he bore his battle-net in.
Glad of the victory, he gazed about him; 5
Many a sun-bright jewel he saw,
Glittering gold, strewn on the ground,
Heaped in the den of the dragon hoary,
Old twilight-flier, — flagons once bright,
Wassail cups wondrous of warriors departed
Striped of their mountings, many a helmet 11
Ancient and rusted, armlets a many,
Curiously woven. (Wealth so hoarded,
Buried treasure, will taint with pride,
Him that hides it, whoever it be.) 15
Towering high o'er the hoard he saw

A gleaming banner with gold inwoven,
Of broidure rare, its radiance streamed
So bright, he could peer to the bounds of the
cave,

Survey its wonders; no worm was seen. 20
Edge of the sword had ended his life.
Then, as they say, that single adventurer
Plundered the hoard that was piled by the
giants;

Gathered together old goblets and platters,
Took what he liked; the towering banner, 25
Brightest of beacons, he brought likewise.
The blade of Beowulf, his brave old chief,
With edge of iron had ended the life
Of him that had guarded the golden hoard
For many a year, and at midnight hour 30
Had spread the terror of surging flames
In front of the den, till death o'ertook him.
So Wiglaf returned with treasure laden,
The high-souled hero hastened his steps,
Anxiously wondered if he should find 35
The lord of the Weders alive where he left
him

Sapped of his strength and stretched on the
ground.

As he came from the hill he beheld his com-
rade,

His lord of bounty, bleeding and faint,
Near unto death. He dashed him once more
Bravely with water, till burden of speech 41
Broke from his breast, and Beowulf spoke,
Gazing sad at the gold before him:

"For the harvest of gold that here I look on,
To the God of Glory I give my thanks. 45
To the Ruler Eternal I render praise
That ere I must go, he granted me this,
To leave to my people this priceless hoard.
'Twas bought with my life; now look ye well
To my people's need when I have departed.
No more I may bide among ye here. 51
Bid the battle-famed build on the foreland
A far-seen barrow when flames have burnt
me.

High o'er the headland of whales it shall
tower,

A beacon and mark to remind my people. 55
And sailors shall call it in years to come
Beowulf's Barrow, as back from afar
O'er the glooming deep they drive their
keels."

The great-hearted king unclasped from
his neck

A collar of gold and gave to his thane, 60
The brave young warrior, his bright-gilt
helmet,

Breastplate and ring. So bade him farewell:
"Thou are the last to be left of our house.

Wyrd hath o'erwhelmed our Waegmunding
line,
Swept my kinsmen swift to their doom. 65
Earls in their prime. I must follow them."
These words were the last that the warrior
gray
Found, ere the funeral-flames he chose.
Swift from his bosom his soul departed 69
To find the reward of the faithful and true.

In lines 2821-2891, Section XXXIX of the MS., the narrative doubles back upon itself to repeat the description of Beowulf and the Dragon lying dead before the cave, and to report Wiglaf's second reproach to the deserters.

XL

*Beowulf's Death Announced to the People.
The Speech of the Herald.*

Then Wiglaf bade the battle-work tell
To the sorrowful troop that had sat all day
At the sea-cliff's edge, their shields in hand,
In dread and in hope, yet doubtful of either:
Their dear lord's return, or his death in the
fight. 5
The herald that came to the headland riding,
Nought kept back of the news that befell,
But truthfully told them the tidings all:
"Now lies low the lord of the Weders;
The generous giver of gifts to the Jutes, 10
Sleeps his battle-sleep, slain by the worm.
At his side lies stretched his slaughterous foe,
Fordone by the dagger. The dragon fierce
Would take no wound from touch of sword;
Its blade would not bite. At Beowulf's side
Wiglaf sits, the son of Weohstan; 16
By the hero dead, the hero living
At his head keeps watch with woful heart
O'er friend and foe."

The Herald now warns of renewed attacks on the Jutes by Franks and Frisians, and alludes to the origin of the feud in the famous raid in which Hygelac was slain. He further warns of renewed attacks by the Swedes, now that Beowulf is dead, and refers to the origin of the wars between Swedes and Jutes and to a famous battle at "Ravenswood." The episodic digression over, the herald returns to present events.

XLI

The Herald's Speech Concluded.

"'Tis time we hasten
To see where lies our lord and king,
Our giver of bounty, and bear him away
To the funeral pyre; of precious gems
Not a few shall melt in the fire with him. 5
The hoard he won, the wealth untold,
The priceless treasure he purchased so dear,
And bought with his life at the bitter end,

The flame shall enfold it, the fire consume.
No warrior one keepsake shall carry away,
No necklace be worn by winsome maid. 11
In sorrow rather, and reft of her gold,
Alone she shall tread the track of an exile,
Now our lord lies low, his laughter stilled,
His mirth and revel. Now many a spear 15
Shall morning-cold be clasped in the hand
And held on high. No harp shall sound
The warriors to wake, but the wan-hued
raven
Shall croak o'er the carcass and call to the
eagle,
To tell how he fared at the feast after battle
When he and the gray wolf gorged on the
slain." 21

Thus ended his tale, his tidings of woe,
The faithful thane, nor falsely reported
Wyrd or word. The warriors rose;
To the Eagles' Cliff they came in sadness, 25
With welling tears, the wonder to see.
Lying helpless, their lord they found
Stretched on the ground, the giver of rings.
The end had come to him, open-handed
King of the Weders, warrior brave. 30
That day a fearful death he had found.
A stranger thing they saw near by:
The loathsome monster lying dead
On the field where they fought, the fiery
dragon,
The gruesome beast was burnt and charred.
Fifty feet in full he measured 36
In length, as he lay, along the ground.
'Twas his wont at night to wing aloft
And dip to earth as his den he sought;
Now he lay dead, his night-revels over. 40
Scattered about were bowls and flagons,
Golden platters, and priceless swords,
With rust eaten through, as though they had
lain

Winters a thousand in the womb of the earth.
O'er that heritage huge, the hoard of afore-
time, 45
A spell had been woven to ward off despoilers,
And none might touch the treasure-vault
hidden;
Save that God alone, the Lord of victory,
The Guardian of men, might grant the power
To unlock the hoard, and lift the treasure, 50
To such a hero as to Him seemed meet.

XLII

*Beowulf's Body Carried to the Funeral Pyre
and the Dragon Cast into the Sea.*

Wiglaf spoke, the son of Weohstan:
"Let us go once more to gaze at the marvels

Still left 'neath the rock; I will lead you in
Where your hands may touch great heaps of
gold,

Bracelets and rings. Let the bier be ready 5
When out of the cave we come again,
To bear away the warrior brave,
Our lord beloved, where long he shall bide,
Kept in the sheltering care of God."

The son of Weohstan, warrior brave, 10
Called on the folk-men, far and wide,
From house and home to hasten and bring
Wood for the pyre of the peerless man,
His funeral pile. "Now fire shall consume,
The wan flame wax o'er the warrior strong,
Who oft stood firm in the iron shower, 16
When the storm of arrows, sent from the
bow-string,

Flew o'er the shield-wall, and the fleet-
winged shaft,

Feathered behind, pushed home the barb." 19
Now the wise young warrior, Weohstan's son,
Seven men called, of the king's own thanes,
The best of the band; the bravest he gathered,
Himself the eighth, they sought the den
Of the hateful beast; one bore in his hand
A lighted torch and led the way. 25

No lots were drawn for the dragon's hoard,
When they saw it lying, loose in the cave,
Uncared for, unguarded, unclaimed by a soul;
There was none to hinder as they hurried
away,

Laden with spoils and splendid heirlooms. 30
O'er the edge of the cliff they cast the dragon,
Into the sea, the scaly worm;
Let the waves engulf the gold-hoard's keeper.
On a wagon they loaded the wondrous
treasure,

Gold past counting. The gray-haired king
They bore to the pyre, on the Point of
Whales. 36

XLIII

The Burning of Beowulf's Body

Then built for Beowulf the band of the Jutes
A funeral pyre; 'twas firmly based.
They hung it with helmets as he had bidden,
With shining byrnie and battle-shields.
In the midst they laid, with loud lament, 5
Their lord beloved, their leader brave.

On the brow of the cliff they kindled the
blaze,

Black o'er the flames the smoke shot up;
Cries of woe, in the windless air,
Rose and blent with the roar of the blast, 10
Till the frame of the body burst with the
heat

Of the seething heart. In sorrowing mood
They mourned aloud their leader dead.

Joined in the wail a woman old,¹
With hair upbound for Beowulf grieved, 15
Chanted a dreary dirge of woe,
Dark forebodings of days to come,

Thick with slaughter and throes of battle,
Bondage and shame. The black smoke rose.
High on the headland they heaped a barrow,
Lofty and broad 'twas built by the Weders,
Far to be seen by sea-faring men. 22

Ten days long they toiled to raise it,
The battle-king's beacon. They built a wall
To fence the brands of the funeral burning, 25
The choicest and best their chiefs could de-
vise.

In the barrow they buried the bracelets and
rings,

All those pieces of precious treasure
That bold-hearted men had brought from the
cave,

Returned to earth the heirloom of heroes, 30
The gold to the ground, again to become
As useless to men as of yore it had been.

Around the barrow the battle-brave rode,
Twelve in the troop, all true-born aethelings,
To make their lament and mourn for the
king; 35

To chant a lay their lord to honor.
They praised his daring; his deeds of prowess
They mentioned in song. For meet it is
That men should publish their master's
praise,

Honor their chieftain, and cherish him dearly
When he leaves this life, released from the
body. 41

Thus joined the men of the Jutes in mourning
Their hero's end. His hearth-companions
Called him the best among kings of the earth,
Mildest of men, and most beloved, 45
Kindest to kinsmen, and keenest for fame,

¹ Perhaps his wife.

THE VENERABLE BEDE (673-735)

The Venerable Bede, a scholarly monk in the Benedictine monastery at Jarrow in Northumbria, is the author of the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, a work written in Latin which is our chief historical authority for the life and civilization of Anglo-Saxon England. In Book IV, Chapter XXIV, of his *History*, he tells the famous story of the poet Cædmon, the earliest English poet whose name has survived to us. Of his poetry, unfortunately, there has been preserved only the short hymn which Bede quotes. The poetical paraphrases of the Bible which long went under Cædmon's name are now known to be of later date.

The *Ecclesiastical History* was one of the works which King Alfred translated, or caused to be translated, into Old English. A good modern translation is that of J. A. Giles (Bohn Library). The selection here printed, translated by A. S. Cook, is by kind permission of Professor Cook and of Ginn & Co. taken from Cook and Tinker's *Select Translations from Old English Poetry*.

BEDE'S ACCOUNT OF THE
POET CÆDMON

Translated by Albert S. Cook

There was in the monastery of this abbess a certain brother especially distinguished by the grace of God, since he was wont to make poems breathing of piety and religion. What-ever he learned of Sacred Scripture by the mouth of interpreters, he in a little time gave forth in poetical language composed with the greatest sweetness and depth of feeling, in English, his native tongue; and the effect of his poems was ever and anon to incite the souls of many to despise the world and long for the heavenly life. Not but that there were others after him among the people of the Angles who sought to compose religious poetry; but none there was who could equal him, for he did not learn the art of song from men, nor through the means of any man; rather did he receive it as a free gift from God. Hence it came to pass that he never was able to compose poetry of a frivolous or idle sort; none but such as pertain to religion suited a tongue so religious as his. Living always the life of a layman until well advanced in years, he had never learned the least thing about poetry. In fact, so little did he understand of it that when at a feast it would be ruled that every one present should, for the entertainment of the others, sing in turn, he would, as soon as he saw the harp coming anywhere near him, jump up from the table in the midst of the banqueting, leave the place, and make the best of his way home.

This he had done at a certain time, and, leaving the house where the feast was in progress, had gone out to the stable where the care of the cattle had been assigned to him for that night. There, when it was time to go to sleep, he had lain down for that purpose. But while he slept some one stood by

him in a dream, greeted him, called him by name, and said, "Cædmon, sing me something." To this he replied, "I know not how to sing, and that is the very reason why I left a feast and came here, because I could not sing." But the one who was talking with him answered, "No matter, you are to sing for me." "Well, then," said he, "what is it that I must sing?" "Sing," said the other, "the beginning of created things." At this reply he immediately began to sing verses in praise of God the Creator, verses that he had never heard, and whose meaning is as follows: "Now should we praise the Keeper of the heavenly kingdom, the might of the Creator and His counsel, the works of the Father of glory; how He, though God eternal, became the author of all marvels. He, the almighty Guardian of mankind, first created for the sons of men heaven as a roof, and afterwards the earth." This is the meaning, but not the precise order, of the words which he sang in his sleep; for no songs, however well they may be composed, can be rendered from one language into another without loss of grace and dignity. When he rose from sleep, he remembered all that he had sung while in that state, and shortly after added, in the same strain, many more words of a hymn befitting the majesty of God.

In the morning he went to the steward who was set over him, and showed him what gift he had acquired. Being led to the abbess, he was bidden to make known his dream and repeat his poem to the many learned men who were present, that they all might give their judgment concerning the thing which he related, and whence it was; and they were unanimously of the opinion that heavenly grace had been bestowed upon him by the Lord. They then set about expounding to him a piece of sacred history or teaching, bidding him, if he could, to turn it into the rhythm of poetry. This he under-

took to do, and departed. In the morning he returned and delivered the passage assigned to him, converted into an excellent poem. The abbess, honoring the grace of God as displayed in the man, shortly afterward instructed him to forsake the condition of a layman and take upon himself the vows of a monk. She thereupon received him into the monastery with his whole family, and made him one of the company of the brethren, commanding that he should be taught the whole course and succession of Biblical history. He, in turn, calling to mind what he was able to learn by the hearing of the ear, and, as it were, like a clean animal, chewing upon it as a cud, transformed it all into most agreeable poetry; and, by echoing it back in a more harmonious form, made his teachers in turn listen to him. Thus he rehearsed the creation of the world, the origin of man, and all the story of Genesis; the departure of Israel from Egypt and their entry into the Promised Land, together with many other histories from Holy Writ; the incarnation of our Lord, his passion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven; the coming of the Holy Ghost and the teaching of the Apostles; moreover, he made many poems about the terror of the future judgment, the awfulness of the pains of hell, and the joy of the heavenly kingdom, besides a great number about the mercies and judgments of God. In all these he exerted himself to allure men from the love of wickedness, and to impel them to the love and practice of righteous living; for he was a very devout man, humbly submissive to the monastic rule, but full of consuming zeal against those who were disposed to act otherwise.

Hence it came to pass that he ended his life with a fair death. For when the hour of his departure drew nigh, he was afflicted for the space of a fortnight with a bodily weakness which seemed to prepare the way; yet it was so far from severe that he was able during the whole of that time to walk about and converse. Near at hand there was a cottage, to which those who were sick and appeared nigh unto death were usually taken. At the

approach of evening on the same night when he was to leave the world, he desired his attendant to make ready a place there for him to take his rest. The attendant did so, though he could not help wondering at the request, since he did not seem in the least like a person about to die. When he was placed in the infirmary, he was somehow full of good humor, and kept talking and joking with those who had already been brought there. Some time after midnight he asked whether they had the Eucharist at hand. "What do you need of the Eucharist?" they answered, "you aren't going to die yet, for you are just as full of fun in talking with us as if nothing were the matter with you." "Never mind," said he, "bring me the Eucharist." Taking it in his hand, he asked, "Are you all at peace with me, and free from any grudge or ill-will?" "Yes," they all responded, "we are perfectly at peace with you, and cherish no grievance whatever." "But are you," said they, "entirely at peace with us?" "Yes, my dear children," he answered without hesitation, "I am at peace with all the servants of God." And thus saying, he made ready for his entrance into the other life by partaking of the heavenly journey-bread. Not long after he inquired, "How near is it to the hour when the brethren are wakened for lauds?" "But a little while," was the reply. "Well then," said he, "let us wait for that hour," and, making over himself the sign of the cross, he laid his head on the pillow, and falling into a light slumber, ended his life in silence. And so it came to pass that, as he had served the Lord in simplicity and purity of mind, and with serene attachment and loyalty, so by a serene death he left the world, and went to look upon His face. And meet in truth it was that the tongue which had indited so many helpful words in praise of the Creator, should frame its very last words in His praise, while in the act of signing himself with the cross, and of commending his spirit into His hands. And that he foresaw his death is apparent from what has here been related.

THE WANDERER

Translated by J. Duncan Spæth¹

The *Wanderer*, probably composed early in the eighth century, is one of the poems of the Exeter Book, a manuscript which has belonged continuously to the library of Exeter Cathedral since the time of the Norman Conquest. It presents with an intensity which suggests personal experience the thoughts of a wandering exile. His liege-lord is dead; his home has been laid waste; his friends are scattered. In the desolation which has come upon him he sees the type of the transitoriness of all human life.

THE WANDERER

Many a lonely man at last comes to honor;
 Merits God's mercy, though much he endured
 On wintry seas, with woe in his heart,
 Dragging his oar through drenching-cold
 brine,
 Homeless and houseless and hunted by
 Wyrd.¹ 5

These are the words of a way-faring wanderer,
 This is his song of the sorrow of life,
 Slaughter of foemen, felling of kinsmen:

Oft in the dark, alone before dawning,
 All to myself my sorrow I tell. 10
 No friend have I here, to whom I may open
 My heart's deep secret, my hidden spring of
 woe.

Well do I know 'tis the way of the high-born,
 Fast in his heart to fetter his feelings,
 Lock his unhappiness in the hold of his mind. 15
 Spirit that sorrows withstandeth not destiny,
 Heart that complaineth plucketh no help.
 A haughty hero will hide his suffering,
 Manfully master misery's pang.

Thus stricken with sorrow, stript of my
 heritage, 20

Far from kinsmen and country and friends,
 Grimly I grappled my grief to my bosom,
 Since long time ago, my giver of bounty
 Was laid in the earth, and left me to roam
 Watery wastes, with winter in my heart. 25
 Forsaken I sought a shielder and protector;
 Far and near I found none to greet the wanderer,

No master to make him welcome in his wine-
 hall;

None to cheer the cheerless, or the friendless
 to befriend.

He who has lost all his loved companions 30
 Knoweth how bitter a bedfellow is sorrow.

¹ Destiny.

Loneliness his lot, not lordly gold,
 Heart-chilling frost, not harvest of plenty.
 Oft he remembers the mirth of the mead-
 hall,
 Yearns for the days of his youth, when his
 dear lord 35
 Filled him with abundance. Faded are those
 joys!

He shall know them no more; no more shall
 he listen

To the voice of his lord, his leader and coun-
 sellor.

Sometimes sleep and sorrow together
 Gently enfold the joyless wanderer: 40
 Bright are his dreams, he embraces his lord
 again,

Kisses his liege, and lays on his knee
 Head and hands as in happy days,
 When he thanked for a boon his bountiful
 giver.

Wakes with a start the wanderer homeless; 45
 Nought he beholds but the heaving surges,
 Seagulls dipping and spreading their wings,
 Scurries of snow and the scudding hail.

Then his heart is all the heavier,
 Sore after sweet dreams sorrow reviveth. 50
 Fain would he hold the forms of his kinsmen,
 Longingly leans to them, lovingly greets
 them;

Slowly their faces swim into distance;
 No familiar greeting comes from the fleeting
 Companies of kinsmen. Care ever shad-
 ows 55

The way of the traveller, whose track is on
 the waters,

Whose path is on the billows of the boundless
 deep.

Behold I know not how I may keep
 My heart from sinking, heavy with sorrow,
 When all life's destiny deeply I ponder, — 60
 Men that are suddenly snatched in their
 prime,
 High-souled heroes; so the whole of this
 earth

Day by day droopeth and sinketh to decay. . . .¹

How dread is the doom of the last desolation,
When all the wealth of the world shall be waste,

65

He that is wise may learn, if he looks
Abroad o'er this land, where lonely and ruinous,

Wind-swept walls, waste are standing;
Tottering towers, crusted with frost,
Crumbling wine-halls, bare to the sky.

70

Dead is their revelry, dust are the revellers!
Some they have fallen on far fields of battle,
Some have gone down in ships on the sea;
Some were the prey of the prowling gray-wolf,

Some by their loved ones were laid in the earth.

75

The Lord of the living hath levelled their mansions,

Silenced the sound of the singing and laughter.

Empty and bare are all their habitations,
Wondrous works of the giants of old.

He that considers this scene of desolation, 80
And this dark life deeply doth ponder, —
Battle and blood-shed, burning and slaughter,

It bringeth to mind, and mournfully he asks:

¹ Ten lines are omitted in Professor Spaeth's translation.

Where is the warrior, where is the war-horse?
Where is the giver of bounty, where are the boon-companions,

85

The "dream and the gleam" that gladden the hall?

Alas the bright ale-cup, alas the brave warrior!

Alas the pride of princes! Their prime is no more;

Sunk under night's shadow, as though it never had been!

Where lusty warriors thronged, this lone wall towers,

90

Weird with dragon-shapes, wondrously carved;

Storm of ash-spears hath stricken the heroes,
Blood-thirsty weapons, Wyrd the supreme.

Wintry blasts now buffet these battlements;
Dreary snow-storms drift up the earth,

95

The terror of winter when wild and wan
Down from the north with the darkness drives

The ruinous scourge of the ruthless hail.

All this life is labor and sorrow,
Doom of destiny darkens o'er earth.

100

Wealth is fleeting, friends are fleeting,
Man is fleeting, maid is fleeting,

All this earth's foundations utterly shall pass.¹

¹ Five concluding lines of moralizing comment are omitted in Professor Spaeth's rendering.

KING ALFRED THE GREAT (849-901)

Alfred, King of the West-Saxons from 871 to 901, having driven back the invading Danes, and established his people in security and peace, turned to the problem of their education. He welcomed at his court scholars from many lands. Finding that many, even of his high ecclesiastics, knew little Latin, he translated, or caused to be translated, into English five important books: the *Consolation of Philosophy* of Boethius, the *Pastoral Care* of Gregory the Great, the *Soliloquies* of St. Augustine, the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bede, and the *Universal History* of Orosius. Into this last translation he inserted two narratives brought to him by Ohthere, a Norwegian traveller and explorer, and by Wulfstan, who had voyaged into the pagan countries of the eastern Baltic.

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THE VOYAGES OF OHTHERE AND WULFSTAN

Translated by Chauncey B. Tinker

OHTHERE'S FIRST VOYAGE

Ohthere¹ told King Alfred, his lord, that he, of all the Norwegians, dwelt farthest to the north. He said that he lived in the northern part of the country, by the shore of

the West Sea. Notwithstanding, the land extended yet farther to the north; but it was all waste, save in a few places here and there where Finns dwell, attracted by the hunting in winter and the sea-fishing in summer. He said that at a certain time he wished to discover how far north the land extended and

¹ Pronounce *Ocht'-hair-e* (with the *ch* as in German).

whether anybody lived north of the waste. So he set out due north along the coast for three days, with the waste land to starboard and the high seas to larboard. By that time he was as far north as whale-fishers ever go. Upon this, he proceeded due north as far as he could sail in the next three days. At that point the land curved to the east — or the sea in on the land, he knew not which; all he knew was that there he waited for a wind from the west, or somewhat from the north-west, and so sailed east, close to land, as far as he could in four days. There he was obliged to wait for a wind from due north, for at that point the land curved due south — or the sea in on the land, he knew not which. Thence he sailed due south, close to land, as far as he could in five days. At that point a great river extended up into the land. Then they turned up into this river, for they durst not sail beyond it for dread of hostile treatment, the land being all inhabited on the other side of the river. He had not encountered any inhabited land since leaving his own home, for to the right the land was uninhabited all the way, save for fishermen, fowlers, and hunters, and these were all Finns; to the left there was always open sea. The Permians had cultivated their land very well, but they durst not enter it. The land of the Terfinns was all waste, save where hunters, fishermen, or fowlers encamped.

The Permians told him many stories both about their own country and about countries which were round them, but he knew not what was true, because he did not see it himself. The Finns and the Permians, it seemed to him, spoke nearly the same language. He made this voyage, in addition to his purpose of seeing the country, chiefly for walruses, for they have very good bone in their teeth — they brought some of these teeth to the king — and their hides are very good for ship-ropes. This whale is much smaller than other whales, being not more than seven ells long; but the best whale-fishing is in his own country — those are eight and forty ells long, and the largest fifty ells long. He said he was one of a party of six who killed sixty of these in two days.

Ohthere was a very wealthy man in such possessions as constitute their wealth, that is, in wild beasts. He still, at the time when he came to the king, had six hundred tame deer that he had not sold. They call these reindeer. Six of these were decoy deer, which are very valuable among the Finns, for it is with them that they capture the wild rein-

deer. He was among the first men in the land, though he had not more than twenty horned cattle, twenty sheep, and twenty swine, and the little that he plowed he plowed with horses. But their income is chiefly in the tribute that the Finns pay them — skins of animals, feathers of birds, whalebone, and ship-ropes made of whale's hide and seal's hide. Every one pays according to his means; the richest has to pay fifteen marten skins and five reindeer skins; one bear skin, forty bushels of feathers, a bear- or otter-skin kirtle, and two ship-ropes, each sixty ells long, one made of whale's hide and the other of seal's.

He said that the country of the Northmen was very long and very narrow. All that his man can use for either grazing or ploughing lies by the sea, and even that is very rocky in some places; and to the east, alongside the inhabited land, lie wild moors. In these waste lands dwell the Finns. And the inhabited land is broadest to the eastward, growing ever narrower the farther north. To the east it may be sixty miles broad, or even a little broader, and midway thirty or broader; and to the north, where it was narrowest, he said it might be three miles broad up to the moor. Moreover the moor is so broad in some places that it would take a man two weeks to cross it, in other places of such a breadth that a man can cross it in six days. . . .

WULFSTAN'S VOYAGE

Wulfstan said that he set out from Haddeby,¹ arriving at Truso after seven days and nights, the ship running all the way under sail. He had Wendland [Mecklenburg and Pomerania] on the starboard, and Langland, Laaland, Falster, and Sconey on the larboard; and all these lands belong to Denmark. And then we² had on our larboard the land of the Burgundians [Bornholmians], who have their own king. After the land of the Burgundians, we had on our left those lands that were first called Blekinge, and Meore,³ and Öland, and Gothland; these lands belong to the Swedes. And we had Wendland [the country of the Wends] to the starboard all the way to the mouth of the Vistula. The Vistula is a very large river, separating Witland from Wendland; and Witland belongs to the Estonians. The Vistula flows out of Wendland, and runs into

¹ In Eastern Schleswig.

² So the Old English.

³ The mainland of Sweden, opposite Öland.

the Frische Haff. The Frische Haff is about fifteen miles broad. Then the Elbing empties into the Frische Haff, flowing from the east out of the lake [Drausen] on the shore of which stands Truso; and there empty together into the Frische Haff, the Elbing from the east, flowing out of Esthonia, and the Vistula from the south, out of Wendland. The Vistula gives its name to the Elbing, running out of the mere [the Frische Haff] west and north into the sea; therefore it [the place where it flows out of the Frische Haff] is called the mouth of the Vistula.

Esthonia [Eastland] is very large, and many towns are there, and in every town there is a king. There is also very much honey, and fishing. The king and the richest men drink mare's milk, but the poor and the slaves drink mead. There is much strife among them. There is no ale brewed by the Esthonians, but there is mead enough.

There is a custom among the Esthonians that when a man dies he lies unburnt in his house, with his kindred and friends, a month — sometimes two; and the kings and other men of high rank still longer, in proportion to their wealth; it is sometimes half a year that they remain unburnt, lying above ground, in their houses. All the while that the body is within there is to be drinking and sports until the day he is burned. The same day on which they are to bear him to the pyre they divide his property, what is left after the drinking and sports, into five or six parts — sometimes into more, according to the

amount of his goods. Then they lay the largest share about a mile from the town, then the second, then the third, till it is all laid within the one mile; and the smallest part must be nearest the town in which the dead man lies. Then there are assembled all the men in the land that have the swiftest horses, about five or six miles from the goods. Then they all run toward the goods, and the man who has the swiftest horse comes to the first and largest portion, and so one after another till it be all taken; and he who arrives at the goods nearest the town gets the smallest portion. Then each man goes his way with the goods, and he may keep them all; and for this reason swift horses are excessively dear in that country. When his property is thus all spent, they bear him out and burn him with his weapons and clothes. Usually they spend all his wealth, what with the long time that the corpse lies within and what with the goods that they lay along the roads, and that the strangers race for and carry off.

It is also a custom among the Esthonians to burn men of every tribe, and if any one finds a bone unburned they have to make great amends for it.

There is one tribe among the Esthonians that has the power of producing cold, and it is because they produce this cold upon them that the corpses lie so long without decaying. And if a man sets two vats full of ale or water, they cause both to be frozen over, whether it be summer or winter.

THE BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

Translated by Tennyson

In the year 937, Athelstan, son of Edward the Elder, grandson of Alfred the Great, and king of the West-Saxons and Mercians, defeated the allied armies of Constantine, king of the Scots, and Anlaf (or Olaf), leader of the Norsemen who a hundred years earlier had established themselves in Ireland. The poem which describes the battle is entered in the *Saxon Chronicle* under the year 937. It is in the same metrical form as *Beowulf* and the rest of Old English poetry; but Tennyson's version, based on a prose translation by his son Hallam, treats the half-line of two beats as the metrical unit.

THE BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

I

Athelstan King,
Lord among Earls,
Bracelet-bestower and
Baron of Barons,
He with his brother,
Edmund Atheling,

Gaining a lifelong
Glory in battle,
Slew with the sword-edge
There by Brunanburh,
Brake the shield-wall,
Hewed the linden-wood,¹
Hacked the battle-shield,
Sons of Edward with hammered brands.

¹ Shields of linden-wood.

II

Theirs was a greatness 15
 Got from their grandsires —
 Theirs that so often in
 Strife with their enemies
 Struck for their hoards and their hearths and
 their homes.

III

Bowed the spoiler, 20
 Bent the Scotsman,
 Fell the ship-crews
 Doomed to the death.
 All the field with blood of the fighters
 Flowed, from when first the great 25
 Sun-star of morning-tide,
 Lamp of the Lord God
 Lord everlasting,
 Glode over earth till the glorious creature
 Sank to his setting. 30

IV

There lay many a man
 Marred by the javelin,
 Men of the Northland
 Shot over shield.
 There was the Scotsman 35
 Weary of war.

V

We the West-Saxons,
 Long as the daylight
 Lasted, in companies
 Troubled the track of the host that we
 hated. 40
 Grimly with swords that were sharp from the
 grindstone,
 Fiercely we hacked at the flyers before us.

VI

Mighty the Mercian,
 Hard was his hand-play,
 Sparing not any of 45
 Those that with Anlaf,
 Warriors over the
 Weltering waters
 Borne in the bark's-bosom,
 Drew to this island — 50
 Doomed to the death.

VII

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-
 stroke,
 Seven strong Earls of the army of Anlaf
 Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,
 Shipmen and Scotsmen. 55

VIII

Then the Norse leader,
 Dire was his need of it,
 Few were his following,
 Fleed to his war-ship;
 Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king in it, 60
 Saving his life on the fallow flood.

IX

Also the crafty one,
 Constantinus,
 Crept to his North again,
 Hoar-headed hero! 65

X

Slender warrant had
 He to be proud of
 The welcome of war-knives —
 He that was reft of his
 Folk and his friends that had 70
 Fallen in conflict,
 Leaving his son too
 Lost in the carnage,
 Mangled to morsels,
 A youngster in war! 75

XI

Slender reason had
 He to be glad of
 The clash of the war-glaive —
 Traitor and trickster
 And spurner of treaties — 80
 He nor had Anlaf
 With armies so broken
 A reason for bragging
 That they had the better
 In perils of battle 85
 On places of slaughter —
 The struggle of standards,
 The rush of the javelins,
 The crash of the charges,¹
 The wielding of weapons — 90
 The play that they played with
 The children of Edward.

XII

Then with their nailed prow
 Parted the Norsemen, a
 Blood-reddened relic of 95
 Javelins over
 The jarring breaker, the deep-sea billow,
 Shaping their way toward Dyflen² again
 Shamed in their souls.

1 Lit. "the gathering of men."

2 Dublin.

XIII

Also the brethren, 100
King and Atheling,
Each in his glory,
Went to his own in his own West-Saxonland,
Glad of the war.

XIV

Many a carcase they left to be carrion, 105
Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin —
Left for the white-tailed eagle to tear it, and
Left for the horny-nibbed raven to rend it,
and
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to gorge it,
and
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald. 110

XV

Never had huger
Slaughter of heroes
Slain by the sword-edge —
Such as old writers
Have writ of in histories — 115
Hapt in this isle, since
Up from the East hither
Saxon and Angle from
Over the broad billow
Broke into Britain with 120
Haughty war-workers who
Harried the Welshman, when
Earls that were lured by the
Hunger of glory gat
Hold of the land. 125

THE BATTLE OF MALDON

Translated by J. Duncan Spæth¹

The battle of Maldon was fought in the year 991 on the shores of a tidal river near the coast of Essex, where a marauding band of Vikings under the famous Olaf Tryggvason had made a landing. Byrhtnoth, alderman of Essex, and liegeman of King Æthelred the Redeless, hastily gathered an army and marched against him. He was killed in the battle, and his army was defeated. The poem is a spirited song of heroic defeat, written, apparently, by some one who had first-hand knowledge of the events, and who was also familiar with the Old English epic poetry of the seventh and eighth centuries.

THE BATTLE OF MALDON

The beginning of the poem is lost. The first sixteen lines of the remaining portion describe how Byrhtnoth's men, arrived at the battle field, dismount and turn their horses loose, how one of them sends his hawk flying to the wood, and how the East Saxon alderman proceeds to marshal his band on the banks of the stream. The poem continues as follows:

Byrhtnoth encouraged his comrades heartily;
Rode through the ranks and roused their
spirits;

Marshalled his men to meet the onset;
Showed them how they should hold their
shields

Firm in their grip, and fearless stand. 5

When he had briskly whetted their courage,
He leaped from his steed and stood with his
people,

His hearth-band beloved and household
thanes.

Then strode to the strand a stalwart North-
man,

The viking herald. They heard him shout, 10

Send o'er the tide the taunt of the pirates;

Hailing the earl, he hurled this challenge:

"Bold sea-rovers bade me tell thee
Straightway thou must send them tribute,
Rings for ransom, royal treasure; 15

Better with gifts ye buy us off,
Ere we deal hard blows and death in battle.

Why spill we blood when the bargain is easy?
Give us the pay and we grant ye peace.

If thou dost agree, who art greatest here, 20
To ransom thy folk with the fee we demand,

And give to the seamen the gold they ask,
Pay with tribute for treaty of peace,

We load the booty aboard our ships,
Haul to sea and hold the truce." 25

Byrhtnoth spake, he brandished his spear,
Lifted his shield and shouted aloud,

Grim was his wrath as he gave them his
answer:

"Hearst thou, pirate, my people's reply?
Ancient swords they will send for ransom; 30

Poison-tipped points they will pay for tribute;
Treasure that scarce will serve you in battle.

Go back pirate, give them my answer;
Bring them this word of bitter defiance;

Tell them here standeth, stern and intrepid, 35
The earl with his folk, to defend his country,

Æthelred's realm, the rights of my lord,
His house and his home; the heathen shall fall,

Pirates and robbers. My people were shamed,

If ye loaded our booty aboard your ships, 40
 And floated them off unfought for, to sea,
 Having sailed so far, to set foot on our soil.
 Not all so easily earn ye our gold!
 Sword-blades and spear-points we sell you
 first;

Battle-play grim, ere ye get our tribute!" 45

Forward he told his troop to come,
 To step under shield and stand by the shore.
 The breadth of the stream kept the bands
 asunder;

Strong came flowing the flood after ebb,
 Filled the channel, and foamed between
 them. 50

Impatient stood by Panta stream,
 East-Saxon host and horde of the pirates,
 Longing to lock their lances in battle.
 Neither could harass or harm the other,
 Save that some fell by the flight of arrows. 55

Down went the tide, the Danes were ready;
 Burned for battle the band of the Vikings;
 On the bridge stood Wulfstan, and barred
 their way.

Byrhtnoth sent him, a seasoned warrior,
 Ceola's son, with his kinsmen to hold it. 60
 The first of the Vikings who ventured to set
 Foot on the bridge, he felled with his spear.
 Two sturdy warriors stood with Wulfstan,
 Maccus and Ælfhere, mighty pair,
 Kept the approach where the crossing was
 shallow; 65

Defended the bridge, and fought with the
 boldest,

As long as their hands could lift a sword.
 When the strangers discovered and clearly saw
 What bitter fighters the bridgewards proved,
 They tried a trick, the treacherous robbers, 70
 Begged they might cross, and bring their crews
 Over the shallows, and up to the shore.
 The earl was ready, in reckless daring,
 To let them land too great a number.
 Byrhtelm's son,¹ while the seamen lis-
 tened, 75

Called across, o'er the cold water:
 "Come ye seamen, come and fight us!
 We give you ground, but God alone knows
 Who to-day shall hold the field."

Strode the battle-wolves bold through the
 water; 80

West over Panta waded the pirates;
 Carried their shields o'er the shining waves;
 Safely their lindenwoods landed the sailors.
 Byrhtnoth awaited them, braced for the
 onslaught,

1 Byrhtnoth.

Haughty and bold at the head of his band. 85
 Bade them build the bristling war-hedge,
 Shield against shield, to shatter the enemy.
 Near was the battle, now for the glory,
 Now for the death of the doomed in the field.
 Swelled the war-cry, circled the ravens, 90
 Screamed the eagle, eager for prey;
 Sped from the hand the hard-forged spear-
 head,

Showers of darts, sharp from the grindstone.
 Bows were busy, bolt stuck in buckler;
 Bitter the battle-rush, brave men fell, 95
 Heroes on either hand, hurt in the fray.
 Wounded was Wulfmær, went to his battle-
 rest;

Cruelly mangled, kinsman of Byrhtnoth,
 Son of his sister, slain on the field.

Pay of vengeance they paid the Vikings; 100
 I heard of the deed of the doughty Edward:
 He struck with his sword a stroke that was
 mighty,

Down fell the doomed man, dead at his feet.
 For this the thane got the thanks of his
 leader,

Praise that was due for his prowess in
 fight. 105

Grimly they held their ground in the battle,
 Strove with each other the stout-hearted
 heroes,

Strove with each other, eager to strike
 First with their darts the foe that was
 doomed. 109

Warriors thronged, the wounded lay thick.
 Stalwart and steady they stood about
 Byrhtnoth.

Bravely he heartened them, bade them to
 win

Glory in battle by beating the Danes.
 Raising his shield, he rushed at the enemy;
 Covered by buckler, he came at a Viking; 115
 Charged him furious, earl against churl,
 Each for the other had evil in store.
 The sailorman sent from the south a javelin,
 Sorely wounding the war-band's leader;
 He shoved with his shield, the shaft snapped
 short; 120

The spear was splintered and sprang against
 him;

Wroth was Byrhtnoth, reached for his
 weapon;

Gored the Viking that gave him the wound.
 Straight went the lance, strong was the
 leader;

Sheer through the throat of the pirate he
 thrust it. 125

His dart meant death, so deadly his aim.
 Swiftly he sent him a second javelin,

That crashed through the corslet and cleft
 his bosom,
 Wounded him sore through his woven mail;
 The poisonous spear-head stood in his
 heart. 130
 Blithe was the leader, laughed in his breast,
 Thanked his Lord for that day's work.

Now one of the pirates poised his weapon;
 Sped from his hand a spear that wounded
 Through and through thethane of Æthel-
 red. 135

There stood at his side a stripling youth;
 Brave was the boy; he bent o'er his lord,
 Drew from his body the blood-dripping dart.
 'Twas Wulfmær the youthful, Wulfstan's
 son;

Back he hurled the hard-forged spear. 140
 In went the point, to earth fell the pirate
 Who gave his master the mortal hurt.
 A crafty seaman crept toward the earl,
 Eager to rob him of armor and rings,
 Bracelets and gear and graven sword. 145
 Then Byrhtnoth drew his blade from the
 sheath,
 Broad and blood-stained, struck at the
 breast-plate.

But one of the seamen stopped the warrior,
 Beat down the arm of the earl with his lance.
 Fell to the ground the gray-hilted sword; 150
 No more he might grasp his goodly blade,
 Wield his weapon; yet words he could utter;
 The hoar-headed warrior heartened his men;
 Bade them forward to fare and be brave.
 When the stricken leader no longer could
 stand, 155

He looked to heaven and lifted his voice:
 "I render Thee thanks, O Ruler of men,
 For the joys Thou hast given, that gladdened
 my life.

Merciful Maker, now most I need,
 Thy goodness to grant me a gracious end, 160
 That my soul may swiftly speed to Thee,
 Come to Thy keeping, O King of angels,
 Depart in peace. I pray Thee Lord
 That the fiends of hell may not harm my
 spirit."

The heathen pirates then hewed him to
 pieces, 165
 And both the brave men that by him stood;
 Ælfnth and Wulfmær, wounded to death,
 Gave their lives for their lord in the fight.

Then quitted the field the cowards and faint-
 hearts;
 The son of Odda started the flight. 170
 Godric abandoned his good lord in battle,
 I Byrhtnoth.

Who many a steed had bestowed on his
 thane.

Leaped on the horse that belonged to his
 leader,

Not *his* were the trappings, *he* had no right to
 them.

Both of his brothers basely fled with him, 175
 Godwin and Godwy, forgetful of honor,
 Turned from the fight, and fled to the woods,
 Seeking the cover, and saving their lives.
 Those were with them, who would have re-
 mained,

Had they remembered how many favors 180
 Their lord had done them in days of old.
 Offa foretold it, what time he arose
 To speak where they met to muster their
 forces.

Many, he said, were mighty in words
 Whose courage would fail when it came to
 fighting. 185

There lay on the field the lord of the people,
 Æthelred's earl; all of them saw him,
 His hearth-companions beheld him dead.
 Forward went fighting the fearless warriors,
 Their courage was kindled, no cowards were
 they; 190

Their will was fixed on one or the other:
 To lose their life, or avenge their leader.
 Ælfwiné spoke to them, son of Ælfric,
 Youthful in years, but unyielding in battle;
 Roused their courage, and called them to
 honor: 195

"Remember the time when we talked in the
 mead-hall,

When bold on our benches we boasted our
 valor,

Deeds of daring we'd do in the battle!
 Now we may prove whose prowess is true.
 My birth and my breeding I boldly pro-
 claim: 200

I am sprung from a mighty Mercian line.
 Aldhelm the alderman, honored and pros-
 perous,

He was my grandsire, great was his fame:
 My people who know me shall never reproach
 me,

Say I was ready to run from the battle, 205
 Back to my home, and abandon my leader,
 Slain on the field. My sorrow is double,
 Both kinsman and lord I've lost in the
 fight."

Forward he threw himself, thirsting for ven-
 geance;

Sent his javelin straight at a pirate. 210
 Fell with a crash his foe to the earth,
 His life-days ended. Then onward he
 strode,

Urging his comrades to keep in the thick of it.

Up spake Offa, with ashen spear lifted:
 "Well hast thou counselled us, well hast en-
 couraged; 215

Noble Ælfwiné, needs must we follow thee.
 Now that our leader lies low on the field,
 Needs must we steadfastly stand by each
 other,

Close in the conflict keeping together,
 As long as our hands can hold a weapon, 220
 Good blade wield. Godric the coward,
 Son of Odda, deceived us all.
 Too many believed 'twas our lord himself,
 When they saw him astride the war-steed
 proud.

His run-away ride our ranks hath broken, 225
 Shattered the shield-wall. Shame on the
 dastard,

Who caused his comrades like cowards to fly!"
 Up spake Leofsunu, lifted his linden-wood,
 Answered his comrades from under his shield:
 "Here I stand, and here shall I stay! 230

Not a foot will I flinch, but forward I'll go!
 Vengeance I've vowed for my valiant leader.
 Now that my friend is fallen in battle,
 My people shall never reproach me, in
 Stourmere;

Call me deserter, and say I returned, 235
 Leaderless, lordless, alone from the fight.
 Better is battle-death; boldly I welcome
 The edge and the iron." Full angry he
 charged,

Daring all danger, disdaining to fly.

Up spake Dunheré, old and faithful, 240
 Shook his lance and shouted aloud,
 Bade them avenge the valiant Byrhtnoth:
 "Wreak on the Danes the death of our lord!
 Unfit is for vengeance who values his life."
 Fell on the foe the faithful body-guard, 245
 Battle-wroth spearmen, beseeching God
 That they might avenge the thane of Æthel-
 red,

Pay the heathen with havoc and slaughter.
 The son of Ecglaf, Æscferth by name,
 Sprung from a hardy North-humbrian
 race, 250

— He was their hostage, — helped them
 manfully.

Never he faltered or flinched in the war-play;
 Lances a plenty he launched at the pirates,
 Shot them on shield, or sheer through the
 breast-plate; 254

Rarely he missed them, many he wounded,
 While he could wield his weapon in battle.
 Still Edward the long held out at the front;
 Brave and defiant, he boasted aloud
 That he would not yield a hair's breadth of
 ground,

Nor turn his back where his better lay
 dead. 260

He broke through the shield-wall, breasted
 the foe,

Worthily paid the pirate warriors
 For the life of his lord ere he laid him down.
 Near him Æthelric, noble comrade,
 Brother of Sibryht, brave and untiring, 265
 Mightily fought, and many another;
 Hacked the hollow shields, holding their own.
 Bucklers were broken, the breast-plate sang
 Its gruesome song. The sword of Offa
 Went home to the hilt in the heart of a
 Viking. 270

But Offa himself soon had to pay for it,
 The kinsman of Gadd succumbed in the
 fight.

Yet ere he fell, he fulfilled his pledge,
 The promise he gave to his gracious lord,
 That both should ride to their burg to-
 gether, 275

Home to their friends, or fall in the battle,
 Killed in conflict and covered with wounds;
 He lay by his lord, a loyal thane.
 Mid clash of shields the shipmen came on,
 Maddened by battle. Full many a lance 280
 Home was thrust to the heart of the doomed.
 Then sallied forth Wistan, Wigelin's son;
 Three of the pirates he pierced in the throng,
 Ere he fell, by his friends, on the field of
 slaughter.

Bitter the battle-rush, bravely struggled 285
 Heroes in armor, while all around them
 The wounded dropped and the dead lay
 thick.

Oswold and Eadwold all the while
 Their kinsmen and comrades encouraged
 bravely,

Both of the brothers bade their friends 290
 Never to weaken or weary in battle,
 But keep up their sword-play, keen to the
 end.

Up spake Byrhtwold, brandished his ash-
 spear,

— He was a tried and true old hero, —
 Lifted his shield and loudly called to
 them: 295

"Heart must be keener, courage the hardier,
 Bolder our mood as our band diminisheth.
 Here lies in his blood our leader and comrade,
 The brave on the beach. Bitter shall rue it
 Who turns his back on the battle-field
 now. 300

Here I stay; I am stricken and old;
 My life is done; I shall lay me down
 Close by my lord and comrade dear."

Six more lines and the MS. breaks off. There cannot
 have been much left. The battle is over.

THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

Edward the Confessor (reigned 1042-66), the last English king before the Conquest, had spent his youth in exile at the court of Normandy, and during his reign he surrounded himself with French-speaking courtiers and ecclesiastics. The Norman Conquest of 1066 determined for the next three centuries the predominance in England of French culture and French literature. There was no conscious effort on the part of the conquerors to force their language on the country; but the great estates were in the hands of French-speaking nobles, and all the higher offices of the Church were held by French-speaking ecclesiastics. French thus became the official and polite language of the realm, and English was depressed into the position of an illiterate dialect, though it continued without interruption to be spoken by the great mass of the population. So far as the finer issues of life were concerned, England was a province of France.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries many books were written on English soil, for it was a time of eager intellectual activity; but they were written either in Latin, the language of the learned throughout Western Europe, or in courtly French. Only rarely was English used for literary purposes, as by Layamon in his long poem the *Brut* (about 1200), or in such graceful lyrics as "Sumer is iumen in."

Relegated almost exclusively to the everyday uses of unlettered speakers, English suffered radical and rapid change. Careless speakers spoke it ungrammatically, with confusion in the use of inflected forms, with slipshod utterance; and there was no one who cared to set them right. Every district had its own dialect, and there was no standard by which to measure good speech and bad. The rich vocabulary of Old English became impoverished through the disuse of all the words for which uneducated people have no need. When in the fourteenth century English became once more the language of literature, it had lost the elaborate inflections of King Alfred's speech, and was almost as simple in its grammatical structure as it is to-day; and the losses in its vocabulary had been made good by wholesale borrowings from French and Latin. The language of *Beowulf* is for us to-day in effect a foreign language which we must laboriously learn; the language of Chaucer, despite some unfamiliar and obsolete words and forms, is essentially our own speech.

The temper of English literature was also profoundly affected by the long supremacy of French. The poetry of Anglo-Saxon England has both vigor and elevation, but lacks most of the lighter graces. It is concerned with the serious, the grimmer aspects of life — with battle and storm and sudden death, the cold gray ocean and the wild moorland. There is not in the whole of it a single love-story. There is no wit or humor or delicate play of fancy. All these elements in which our modern literature is so rich are part of what we have learned from the French.

Of all the forms of literature which flourished in medieval France and Anglo-Norman England the most important was the romance of chivalrous adventure and courtly love. In these poems, which often extend themselves to inordinate length, knights, perfect in courtesy as in valor, pass through marvelous adventures and pay tribute of extravagant and despairing devotion to a noble mistress whose every wish is their supreme law. Very characteristic of them is this worship of womanhood, which has its spiritual analogue in the deep devotion paid to the person of the Blessed Virgin. The matter of these romances is sometimes drawn from the stories of classical antiquity, as in the romances on which are founded Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and the Knight's tale of Palamon and Arcite; sometimes from the exploits of Charlemagne and his peers; and, chief source of all, from the cycle of romantic adventures which grew up about the legendary figure of King Arthur. Most perfect of all the romances in English is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the action of which begins and ends in Arthur's court. In the fifteenth century, Sir Thomas Malory retold in stately English prose the whole cycle of Arthurian romances, and made them an integral part of English literature.

Another important type is the allegory, which most often takes the form of a dream-vision in which, as in the *Romance of the Rose* and in Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, the poet is transported to a lovely garden where he meets such abstract personages as Idleness, Fair-Welcome, Mirth, and Wicked-Tongue. This form serves in the *Vision of Piers Plowman* as the vehicle of trenchant social satire.

Romance and allegory, saint's legend and moral tale, the fable of beasts who talk like men, the short realistic tale of sordid realities, the *balade* and roundelay, these and other literary forms had been developed in the French literature of the thirteenth century, and were ready for immediate adoption by the authors of the fourteenth century who discovered that English also was capable of literary use. Gower had written a long poem in French, and another in Latin, before he wrote in English his *Confessio Amantis*. Chaucer was steeped in the literature of France, and may well

have written French verses in his youthful days. Both Chaucer and Gower learned their art and the forms of their verse from French sources, though Chaucer drew inspiration also from the great writers of Italy and from the poetry of ancient Rome. But the tradition of the Old English alliterative unrhymed verse had lingered on, and *Piers Plowman* is written in a measure similar to that of *Beowulf*. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* uses the same measure combined with short quatrains of rhyming verse.

The fourteenth century in England is a period of great literary and intellectual activity. While Chaucer with his delicate irony and the poet of *Piers Plowman* with his grim humor and moral earnestness were showing how far practice had departed from the fair ideal of medieval society, the reformer Wiclif was openly questioning the fundamental theories of the medieval Church and was translating into English the Latin Vulgate Bible.

The fifteenth century, on the other hand, is for English literature a relatively barren period. Lydgate, Occleve, King James of Scotland, and many others tried with very indifferent success to carry on the poetical tradition of Chaucer and Gower. Much was written both in prose and verse; but, if we except the popular ballads some of which may date from the fifteenth century, nothing of first-rate importance remains except the splendid prose of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*.

An excellent account in brief compass of the literature of the period, French and Latin as well as English, is C. S. Baldwin's *English Medieval Literature* (Longmans). More detailed is W. H. Schofield's *History of English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer* (Macmillan). W. P. Ker's *Epic and Romance* (Macmillan) and *English Literature, Medieval* (Holt) are excellent guides. For a fuller body of selections than is possible in the present volume, see Neilson and Webster's *Chief British Poets of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Houghton Mifflin). An exhaustive scholarly bibliography of the period is J. E. Wells's *Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1400*.

EARLY ENGLISH LYRICS

"SUMER IS ICUMEN IN"

This song, written about 1240, is found, with musical setting, in MS. Harleian 978 of the British Museum.

Sumer is icumen ¹ in;
 Lhude ² sing, cuccu!
 Groweth sed, and bloweth ³ med,⁴
 And springth the wude ⁵ nu.
 Sing, cuccu! 5
 Awe ⁶ bleteth after lomb, ⁷ *cow*
 Lhouth ⁷ after calve cu;
 Bulluc sterteth,⁸ bukke verteth;⁹
 Murie ¹⁰ sing, cuccu!
 Cuccu! cuccu! 10
 Wel singes thu, cuccu;
 Ne swik ¹¹ thu naver ¹² nu. *now*

ALYSOUN

Bytuene Mersh and Averil,
 When spray biginneth to springe,
 The lutel foul hath hire wyl
 On hyre lud ¹³ to syngre.
 Ic libbe ¹⁴ in love-longinge 5
 For semlokest ¹⁵ of alle thinge;
 He ¹⁶ may me blisse bringe;

1 come. 2 loudly. 3 bloometh. 4 meadow.
 5 wood. 6 ewe. 7 loweth. 8 frisketh.
 9 breaks wind. 10 merrily. 11 cease. 12 never.
 13 language. 14 I live. 15 goodlieth. 16 she.

Icham ¹ in hire baundoun.²
 An hendy hap ichabbe yhent;³
 Ichot ⁴ from hevene it is me sent; 10
 From alle wymmen mi love is lent,⁵
 And lyht ⁶ on Alysoun.

On heu ⁷ hire her ⁸ is fayr ynoh,⁹
 Hire browe broune, hire eye blake;
 With lossom chere he on me loh, 15
 With middel ¹¹ smal and wel ymake.
 Bote ¹² he me wolle to hire take,
 For te buen ¹³ hire owen make,¹⁴
 Longe to lyven ichulle ¹⁵ forsake,
 And feye ¹⁶ fallen adoun. 20

Nihtes when I wende ¹⁷ and wake,
 Forthi ¹⁸ myn wonges ¹⁹ waxeth won;
 Levedi,²⁰ al for thine sake
 Longinge is ylent me on.²¹
 In world nis non so wyter mon,²² 25
 That al hire bounte telle con.
 Hire swyre ²³ is whittore then the swon,
 And feyrest may ²⁴ in toune.

1 I am. 2 power. 3 I know.
 4 A kindly fate I have lighted on. 5 turned. 6 lighted. 7 color. 8 hair.
 9 enough. 10 With loving mien she on me laughed. 11 waist. 12 unless. 13 be. 14 mate.
 15 I shall. 16 death-stricken. 17 turn. 18 for this reason. 19 cheeks. 20 lady.
 21 appointed to me. 22 wise man. 23 neck. 24 maid.

Icham for wowing al forwake,¹
 Wery so water in wore.²
 Lest eny reve³ me my make,
 Ichabbe y-yerned yore.⁴
 Beter is tholien whyle sore,⁵
 Then mournen evermore.

30

Geynest under gore,¹
 Herkne to my roun.²
 An hendy hap ichabbe yhent;
 Ichot from hevene it is me sent;
 From alle wymmen mi love is lent,
 And lyht on Alysoun.

35

40

About 1310.

PIERS THE PLOWMAN

The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman was very popular in its own day, and is still a document of great historical and literary interest. It has come down to us in three distinct versions. Version A, written soon after 1362, consists of a prologue and twelve "passus" or cantos, and contains nearly 2600 lines. Version B, written about 1377, contains the material of Version A with many revisions and additions, and adds ten new passus. It is nearly three times as long as A. Version C, written between 1393 and 1398, is a revision of Version B, but a revision which does not add materially to the number of verses.

The poem consists of a series of dream-visions, allegorically interpreted as criticisms of human life — the life of the individual and the life of society as a whole. The world of fourteenth-century England, the "fair field full of folk," as the dreamer sees it, is seriously out of joint. Many of the evils are the same which in the kindlier pages of Chaucer are exposed to good-natured laughter. The author of *Piers the Plowman* is by no means lacking in humor; but it is a humor of a grimmer sort than Chaucer's. His satire is informed with moral indignation, with the reformer's zeal to call humanity back to the ideals, religious and social, from which it has strayed.

Who was the author, we do not know. In all three of the versions the dreamer is called Will or William; and tradition has called the author William Langland. But the authenticity of this tradition is doubtful. Whether Versions B and C are the work of the original author, or of other men who took up his work and carried it on in his spirit, is also matter of dispute.

The metre is the unrhymed, alliterating measure of *Beowulf*, the tradition of which survived the Norman Conquest and was revived by many English poets of the fourteenth century, at the very time when Chaucer and Gower were establishing the more regular rhymed verse of their French and Italian models.

Piers the Plowman has been edited by W. W. Skeat for the Oxford University Press. The selections here printed — the Prologue and Passus V of Version A — are from the translation into modern English by Neilson and Webster printed in *Chief British Poets of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Houghton Mifflin Co.).

THE VISION OF WILLIAM CONCERNING PIERS THE PLOWMAN

VERSION A

PROLOGUE

In a summer season, when soft was the sun,
 I clad me in rough clothing, a shepherd as
 I were;

In habit of a hermit, unholy of works,
 Went I wide in this world, wonders to hear.
 But on a May morning on Malvern Hills⁵
 To me befell a marvel, a fairy thing methought.

I was weary of wandering and went me to
 rest

Under a broad bank by a burn side;

¹ I am, because of my yearning, exhausted by lying
 awake.

² weir (?).

⁴ yearned long.

³ rob.

⁵ suffer for a while sorely.

And as I lay and leaned and looked on the
 waters,

I slumbered in a sleep, it sounded so pleasant.¹⁰

Then did I dream a marvellous dream,
 That I was in a wilderness, wist I not where;
 And as I beheld into the east, on high to the
 sun,

I saw a tower on a hill-top, splendidly fashioned;

A deep dale beneath, a dungeon therein,¹⁵
 With a deep ditch and dark, and dreadful
 to see.

A fair field full of folk found I there between,

Of all manner of men, the mean and the rich,
 Working and wandering, as the world requireth.

Some put them to the plow, and played full
 seldom,

20

¹ loveliest alive (*lit.* in a dress).

² song.

In plowing and sowing produced they full
hardly
What many of these wasters in gluttony
destroy.
And some gave themselves to pride, ap-
pareled them accordingly,
In fashion of clothing strangely disguised.
To prayer and to penance put themselves
many, 25
For love of our Lord lived they full hard,
In hope to have the bliss of heaven's king-
dom,
As anchorites and hermits that hold them-
selves in cells,
Covet not in the country to gad all about,
With luxurious living their body to please. 30
And some chose trade, to prosper the
better,
As it seems to our sight that such men
should;
And some mirth to make, as minstrels can,
And get gold with their glee, guiltless, I trow.
But jesters and buffoons, Judas's chil-
dren, 35
Found for themselves fantasies and of them-
selves fools made,
Yet have their wits at command, to work if
they will.
What Paul preached of them I dare not
prove here;
Qui loquitur turpiloquium,¹ he is Lucifer's
servant.
Askers and beggars fast about flitted, 40
Till their bags and their bellies brimful were
crammed;
Feigned for their food, fought at the ale-
house;
In gluttony, God wot, go they to bed
And rise up with ribaldry, these bullying
beggar-knaves;
Sleep and sloth follow them ever. 45
Pilgrims and palmers pledge themselves
together
To seek the shrine of St. James and saints at
Rome;
Went forth in their way with many wise
tales,
And had leave to lie all their life after.
Hermits in a band with hooked staves 50
Went to Walsingham, and their wenches
after.
Great lubbers and long, that loath were to
work,
Clothed themselves in capes to be known for
brethren,
And some dressed as hermits their ease to
have.

¹ He who speaketh baseness.

I found there friars, all the four orders, 55
Preaching to the people for profit of their
bellies,
Interpreting the gospel as they well please,
For covetousness of capes construes it ill;
For many of these masters may clothe them-
selves at will,
For money and their merchandise meet oft
together. 60
Since Charity hath turned trader, and
shriven chiefly lords,
Many wonders have befallen in these few
years.
Unless Holy Church now be better held
together
The most mischief on earth will mount up
fast.
There preached a pardoner, as he a priest
were, 65
And brought up a bull with bishop's seals,
And said he himself would absolve them all
From breach of fasting and broken vows.
The laymen liked him well, believed his
speech,
And came up kneeling and kissed his bull; 70
He banged them with his brevet,² and
bleared their eyes,
And purchased with his parchment rings and
brooches.
Thus ye give your gold gluttony to help,
And grant it to rascals that run after lech-
ery.
Were the bishop holy and worth both his
ears, 75
They should not be so brazen to deceive so
the people.
Yet it is not against the bishop that the
knave preacheth;
But the parish priest and pardoner share the
silver
That the poor parishioners should have but
for them.
Parsons and parish priests complain to
their bishops 80
That their parish hath been poor since the
pestilence³ time,
And ask leave and licence at London to
dwell
To sing there for simony,³ for silver is sweet.
There hang about a hundred in hoods of
silk,
Sergeants, it seems, to serve at the bar; 85
Plead at the law for pence and for pounds,
Not for love of our Lord unloose their lips
once.

¹ letter of indulgence.

² Probably the great plague of 1348-1349.

³ getting money singing anniversary masses for the
dead.

Thou mightest better measure the mist on
Malvern hills

Than get a mum of their mouth till money
be shown.

I saw there bishops bold and bachelors
of divinity 90

Become clerks of account, the king to serve;
Archdeacons and deacons, that dignity have
To preach to the people and poor men to
feed,

Have leapt to London, by leave of their
bishops,

To be clerks of the King's Bench, to the
country's hurt. 95

Barons and burgesses, and husbandmen
also,

I saw in that assembly, as ye shall hear
hereafter.

Bakers, butchers, and brewers many,
Woollen weavers, and weavers of linen,
Tailors, tanners, and fullers also, 100

Masons, miners, and many other crafts,
Ditchers and delvers, that do their work ill,
And drive forth the long day with "Dieu
vous sauve, dame Emma." 1

Cooks and their boys cry "Hot pies, hot!
Good geese and pigs, go dine, go dine!" 105

Taverners to them told the same tale
With good wine of Gascony and wine of
Alsace,

Of Rhine and of Rochelle, the roast to digest.
All this I saw sleeping, and seven times more.

PASSUS V

The king and his knights to the church
went

To hear matins and mass, and to the meat
after.

Then waked I from my winking, I was wo-
ful withal

That I had not heavier slept and seen more.
Ere I a furlong had fared, a faintness me

seized, 5

That further might I not a-foot, for default
of sleep.

I sat softly adown, and said my creed,
And so I babbled on my beads that it brought
me asleep.

Then saw I much more than I before told,
For I saw the field full of folk that I before
showed, 10

And Conscience with a cross came to preach.
He prayed the people to have pity on
themselves,

And proved that these pestilences were for
pure sin,

And this southwestern wind on a Saturday
at even

Was clearly for pride, and for no cause else, 15
Peartrees and plumtrees were dashed to the
ground,

In ensample to men that we should do the
better.

Beeches and broad oaks were blown to the
earth.

And turned the tail upward in token of
dread

That deadly sin ere Doomsday should de-
stroy them all. 20

On this matter I might mumble full long,
But I say as I saw, so help me God!

How Conscience with a cross commenced to
preach.

He bade wasters go work at what they best
could,

And win what they wasted with some sort of
craft. 25

He prayed Peronelle her fur-trimming to
leave,

And keep it in her coffer for capital at need.
Thomas he taught to take two staves,

And fetch home Felice from the cucking-
stool.

He warned Wat his wife was to blame, 30
That her head-dress was worth a mark and
his hood worth a groat.

He charged merchants to chasten their
children,

Let them lack no respect, while they are
young.

He prayed priests and prelates together,
What they preach to the people to prove it in
themselves — 35

"And live as ye teach us, we will love you the
better."

And then he advised the orders their rule to
obey —

"Lest the king and his council abridge your
supplies,

And be steward in your stead, till ye be
better ordered.

And ye that seek St. James, and saints at
Rome, 40

Seek me Saint Truth, for He can save you
all;

Qui cum patre et filio, fare you well!"

Then ran Repentance and rehearsed this
theme,

And made William to weep water with his
eyes.

Pride Pernel Proud-heart flung herself on
the ground, 45

And lay long ere she looked up, and to Our
Lady cried,

1 "God save you, dame Emma" — apparently a popular song.

And promised to Him who all of us made
She knewd unsew her smock, and wear in-
stead a hair shirt

To tame her flesh with, that frail was to sin:
"Shall never light heart seize me, but I shall
hold me down 50

And endure to be slandered as I never did
before.

And now I can put on meekness, and mercy
beseech

Of all of whom I have had envy in my heart."

Lust Lecher said "Alas!" and to Our
Lady cried

To win for him mercy for his misdeeds, 55

Between God himself and his poor soul,
Provided that he should on Saturday, for
seven years,

Drink but with the duck and dine but once.

Envy Envy, with heavy heart, asketh after
shrift,

And greatly his guiltiness beginneth to
show. 60

Pale as a pellet, in a palsy he seemed,

Clothed in a coarse cloth, I could him not
describe;

A kirtle and a short cloak, a knife by his side;

Of a friar's frock were the fronts of his sleeves.

As a leek that had lain long in the sun 65

So looked he with lean cheeks; foully he
frowned.

His body was swollen; for wrath he bit his
lips.

Wrathfully he clenched his fist, he thought
to avenge himself

With works or with words, when he saw his
time.

"Venom, or varnish, or vinegar, I trow, 70

Boils in my belly, or grows there, I ween.

Many a day could I not do as a man ought,

Such wind in my belly wellethe ere I dine.

I have a neighbor nigh me, I have annoyed
him oft,

Blamed him behind his back, to bring him in
disgrace, 75

Injured him by my power, punished him full
oft,

Belied him to lords, to make him lose silver,

Turned his friends to foes, with my false
tongue;

His grace and his good luck grieve me full
sore.

Between him and his household I have made
wrath; 80

Both his life and his limb were lost through
my tongue.

When I met in the market him I most hate,

I hailed him as courteously as if I were his
friend.

He is doughtier than I, I dare do him no
harm.

But had I mastery and might, I had mur-
dered him for ever! 85

When I come to the church, and kneel before
the rood,

And should pray for the people, as the priest
teacheth us,

Then I cry upon my knees that Christ give
them sorrow

That have borne away my bowl and my
broad sheet.

From the altar I turn mine eye and be-
hold 90

How Henry hath a new coat, and his wife
another;

Then I wish it were mine, and all the web
with it.

At his losing I laugh, in my heart I like it;
But at his winning I weep, and bewail the
occasion.

I deem that men do ill, yet I do much
worse, 95

For I would that every wight in this world
were my servant,

And whoso hath more than I, maketh my
heart angry.

Thus I live loveless, like an ill-tempered
dog,

That all my breast swelleth with the bitter-
ness of my gall;

No sugar is sweet enough to assuage it at
all, 100

Nor no remedy drive it from my heart;

If shrift then should sweep it out, a great
wonder it were."

"Yes, surely," quoth Repentance, and ad-
vised him to good,

"Sorrow for their sins saveth full many."

"I am sorry," quoth Envy, "I am seldom
other, 105

And that maketh me so mad, for I may not
avenge me."

Covetousness Then came Covetousness, I
could not describe him,

So hungry and so hollow Sir Harvey looked.

He was beetle-browed with two bleared
eyes,

And like a leathern purse flapped his cheeks;

In a torn tabard of twelve winters' age; 111

Unless a louse could leap, I can not believe

That she could wander on that walk, it was
so threadbare.

"I have been covetous," quoth this Caitiff,
"I admit it here;

For some time I served Sim at 'The Oak' 115

And was his pledged apprentice, his profit
to watch.

First I learned to lie, in a lesson or two,
And wickedly to weigh was my second lesson.
To Winchester and to Weyhill I went to the
fair

With many kinds of merchandise, as my
master bade; 120

But had not the grace of guile gone among
my ware,

It had been unsold these seven year, so help
me God!

Then I betook me to the drapers, my gram-
mar to learn,

To draw the list¹ along, to make it seem
longer.

Among these rich striped cloths learned I a
lesson, 125

Pierced them with a pack-needle, and pleated
them together,

Put them in a press, and fastened them
therein

Till ten yards or twelve were drawn out to
thirteen.

And my wife at Westminster, that woollen
cloth made,

Spake to the spinners to spin it soft. 130

The pound that she weighed by, weighed a
quarter more

Than my balance did, when I weighed true.
I bought her barley, she brewed it to sell;

Penny-ale and white perry, she poured it
together,

For laborers and low folk, that work for
their living. 135

The best in the bed-chamber lay by the
wall,

Whoso tasted thereof bought it ever after,
A gallon for a goat, God wot, no less

When it came in cups. Such tricks I used.
Rose the retailer is her right name; 140

She hath been a huckster these eleven win-
ters.

But I swear now soothly that sin will I
quit,

And never wickedly weigh, nor false trade
practise,

But wend to Walsingham, and my wife also,
And pray the Rood of Bromholm to bring me
out of debt." 145

Gluttony Now beginneth the Glutton to go
to the shrift,

And wanders churchwards, his shrift to tell,
Then Bet the brewster bade him good mor-
row,

And then she asked him whither he would
go.

"To holy church," quoth he, "to hear
mass, 150

¹ edge of the cloth, in measuring.

Since I shall be shriven, and sin no more."

"I have good ale, gossip," quoth she; "Glut-
ton, what say you?"

"Hast aught in thy purse," quoth he, "any
hot spices?"

"Yea, Glutton, gossip," quoth she, "God
wot, full good;

I have pepper and peony-seeds, and a pound
of garlick, 155

A farthing worth of fennel-seed, for these
fasting days."

Then goeth Glutton in, and great oaths
after;

Cis the shoemaker's wife sat on the bench,
Wat the ward of the warren, and his wife
both,

Tomkin the tinker and twain of his serv-
ants; 160

Hick the hackney-man, and Hogg the needle
seller,

Clarice of Cock's-Lane, and the clerk of the
church,

Sir Piers of Prie-Dieu, and Pernel of Flan-
ders,

Dawe the ditcher, and a dozen others.
A fiddler, a rat-catcher, a scavenger of Cheap-
side, 165

A rope-maker, a riding-boy, and Rose the
dish-maker,

Godfrey of Garlickshire, and Griffin the
Welshman,

And of tradesmen a band, early in the morn-
ing

Stand Glutton, with good-will, a treat in
good ale.

Then Clement the cobbler cast off his
cloak, 170

And at "the new fair" made offer to bar-
ter it;

And Hick the ostler flung his hood after,
And bade Bett the butcher act on his be-
half.

Then were chapmen chosen, the articles to
value;

Whoso had the hood should have something
to boot. 175

They rose up rapidly, and whispered to-
gether,

And appraised the penny-worths, and parted
them by themselves;

There were oaths a-plenty, whoso might hear
them.

They could not, in conscience, accord to-
gether,

Till Robin the rope-maker was chosen to
arise, 180

And named for an umpire, to avoid all de-
bate,

For he should appraise the pennyworths, as
seemed good to him.

Then Hick the ostler had the cloak,
On condition that Clement should have his
cup filled,

And have Hick the ostler's hood, and hold
him well served; ¹⁸⁵

And he that first repented should straight
arise

And greet Sir Glutton with a gallon of ale.

There was laughing and cheating and
"Let go the cup!"

Bargains and beverages began to arise,
And they sat so till evensong, and sang some
while, ¹⁹⁰

Till Glutton had gulped down a gallon and a
gill.

He had no strength to stand, till he his staff
had;

Then 'gan he to go like a gleeman's bitch,
Sometimes to the side, sometimes to the rear,
Like a man laying lines to catch birds with.
When he drew to the door, then his eyes grew
dim, ²⁰⁰

He stumbled at the threshold, and threw to
the ground.

Clement the cobbler caught Glutton by the
middle,

And to lift him up he laid him on his knees;
And Glutton was a great churl, and grim in
the lifting,

And coughed up a caudle in Clement's
lap, ²⁰⁵

That the hungriest hound in Hertfordshire
Durst not lap that loathsomeness, so un-
lovely it smacketh;

So that, with all the woe in the world, his
wife and his wench

Bore him home to his bed, and brought him
therein.

And after all this surfeit, a sickness he
had, ²¹⁰

That he slept Saturday and Sunday, till sun
went to rest.

Then he waked from his winking, and
wiped his eyes;

The first word that he spake was, "Where is
the cup?"

His wife warned him then, of wickedness and
sin.

Then was he ashamed, that wretch, and
scratched his ears, ²¹⁵

And 'gan to cry grievously, and great dole
to make

For his wicked life, that he had lived.

"For hunger or for thirst, I make my vow,
Shall never fish on Friday digest in my maw,

Till Abstinence, my aunt, have given me
leave; ²²⁰

And yet I have hated her all my life-time."

Sloth Sloth for sorrow fell down swoon-
ing,

Till *Vigilate*, the watcher, fetched water to
his eyes,

Let it flow on his face, and fast to him cried,
And said, "Beware of despair, that will thee
betray. ²²⁵

'I am sorry for my sins,' say to thyself,
And beat thyself on the breast, and pray God
for grace,

For there is no guilt so great that His mercy
is not more."

Then Sloth sat up and sighed sore,
And made a vow before God, for his foul
sloth, ²³⁰

"There shall be no Sunday this seven year
(save sickness it cause)

That I shall not bring myself ere day to the
dear church,

And hear matins and mass, as I a monk were.
No ale after meat shall withhold me thence,
Till I have heard evensong, I promise by the
rood. ²³⁵

And ¹ yet I shall yield again — if I have so
much —

All that I wickedly won, since I had wit.
And though I lack a livelihood I will not stop
Till each man shall have his own, ere I hence
wend;

And with the residue and the remnant, by
the rood of Chester, ²⁴⁰

I shall seek Saint Truth, ere I see Rome!"

Robert the robber, on *Reddite* ² he looked,
And because there was not wherewith, he
wept full sore.

But yet the sinful wretch said to himself:
"Christ, that upon Calvary on the cross

died'st, ²⁴⁵

Though Dismas ³ my brother besought grace
of thee,

And thou hadst mercy on that man for *me-*

mento ⁴ sake,
Thy will be done upon me, as I have well
deserved

To have hell for ever if no hope there were.

So rue on me, Robert, that no counsel have, ²⁵⁰

Nor ever ween to win by any craft that I
know.

¹ Ll. 236-259, dealing with the restitution of stolen goods, appear in C in connection with Avarice. The attaching of them to Sloth in A and B seems to point to some confusion in the text. Note that in A the sin of Wrath is omitted.

² Make restitution, *Romans*, xiii, 7.

³ The name given to the penitent thief in the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*.

⁴ Remember me, *Luke*, xxiii, 42.

But, for thy much mercy, mitigation I be-
 seech;
 Damn thee not on Doomsday because I did
 so ill."
 But what befell this felon, I cannot well show,
 But well I know he wept hard, water with his
 eyes,
 And acknowledged his guilt to Christ again
 thereafter,
 That the pikestaff of Penitence he should
 polish anew,

And leap with it o'er the land, all his life-
 time,
 For he hath lain by *Latro*,¹ Lucifer's brother.
 A thousand of men then throng to-
 gether,
 Weeping and wailing for their wicked deeds,
 Crying up to Christ, and to His clean
 Mother
 To give grace to seek Saint Truth, God grant
 they so might!

¹ Latin for "thief."

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (?1340-1400)

Chaucer was born in London about the year 1340. His father, a prosperous wine-merchant, had influence enough to secure for his son an appointment as page in the household of a great noble, and later as valet of the king's household, a position ordinarily open only to young men of noble birth. Chaucer's whole life was spent in the service of his royal masters, Edward III and Richard II, under whom he held various offices of trust and responsibility, among others that of Comptroller of Customs for the Port of London. In 1359 he saw military service in France, where he was taken prisoner by the French. In 1373, and again in 1378, he was sent on the king's business to Italy. There he learned to read Italian, and became acquainted with the writings of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, by whom his own writing was profoundly influenced. In the latter part of his life he lived outside of London, at Greenwich on the road to Canterbury. In 1386 he was elected Member of Parliament for the shire of Kent, a fact which suggests that he was a landowner in the county. He was married to a lady named Philippa, who seems also to have been connected with the court. Chaucer died in 1400, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

His principal writings are: the *Book of the Duchess*, an elegy on the death of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, in the form of the dream-vision so popular in Old French poetry, written about 1369; the *House of Fame*, also a dream-vision poem, but showing the influence of Chaucer's reading of Italian literature; the *Parliament of Fowls*; *Troilus and Criseyde*, in many ways its author's greatest masterpiece, a poem of over 8000 lines, finished about 1385, which, modelled on Boccaccio's poem, *Il Filostrato*, tells the story of Troilus, son of King Priam of Troy, and his love for Criseyde, who in the end plays him false; the *Legend of Good Women*, begun about 1386 but never finished, which after a very lovely dream-vision prologue, gives the stories of various heroines of antiquity who were faithful to their faithless lovers; the *Canterbury Tales*, begun about 1387 but never finished.

Chaucer is one of the greatest poets of our literature. If Shakespeare stands apart as our greatest, still Milton can dispute with Chaucer the honor of second place. *Troilus and Criseyde*, with its vivid dramatic power, its subtle analysis of character, and its poetic style at the same time gracious and noble, is the outstanding masterpiece of English narrative verse. The *Canterbury Tales* present in varied pageantry the whole range of medieval life — its religious aspiration, its chivalric ideals, its intellectual interests, its every-day realities. And despite the difference of external appearance, the life so brilliantly depicted in Chaucer's pages has much in common with our own. When one gets accustomed to the unfamiliar forms of the language, one feels that Chaucer, like Shakespeare, is not of an age but for all time.

His prevailing manner is that of high comedy. Everywhere about him he sees the contrast between what men profess and what they practice, between what they hope for and what they get; but he sees it not with the eyes of the reformer but of the kindly critic, ready to find good in the worst of us, disposed to laugh rather than weep at the perpetual irony of human life.

The standard edition of Chaucer is by W. W. Skeat in six volumes (Oxford Press). The best single-volume edition is Skeat's *Student's Chaucer* (Oxford Press); but the edition now in preparation by F. N. Robinson (Houghton Mifflin) will certainly displace it. Useful critical studies are *Chaucer and his Poetry* by G. L. Kittredge (Harvard University Press, 1915); and *The Poetry of Chaucer* by R. K. Root (Houghton Mifflin, revised ed. 1922).

The poems of Chaucer included in this volume are all in five-stress iambic verse, rhymed either in couplets or in the seven-line stanza known as rhyme royal. Chaucer had an exacting ear for metre; but the music of his verse will be lost unless the reader learns to pronounce it with some approach to Chaucer's pronunciation, which was in many respects different from our own. A full statement of these differences is not possible in brief compass, and a correct pronunciation requires much practice; but observance of the following rules will produce a pronunciation near enough to that of Chaucer to preserve the effect of his metre and rhyme.

1. Long vowels are to be given their so-called Continental values, the values which they have in Latin, French, German, Spanish, or Italian: *a* as in *father*; *e* as in *café*; *i* (or *y*) as in *machine*; *o* as in *bone*; *u* as in French *du*. Short vowels are to be given the same sounds spoken more rapidly; but unaccented *e* has the sound of *a* in *China*.

2. Diphthongs: *ai* (or *ay*) as in *play*; *au* (or *aw*) like *ow* in *brow*; *ei* (or *ey*) as in *rein*; *oi* (or *oy*) as in *boy*; *ou* (or *ow*) as in *croup*.

3. There are no silent letters. Every letter is to be pronounced, except that final unaccented *e* is usually elided when the following word begins with a vowel (or with *h*). Doubling a vowel indicates that the vowel is long, but does not alter its value; *oo* never has the sound of modern English *moo*.

4. Consonants are in general pronounced as in modern English; but *gh* has the sound of German *ch*.

THE CANTERBURY TALES

The *Canterbury Tales* is a collection of stories set in the framework of a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. Each of the thirty pilgrims was to tell a story on the road to Canterbury and another on the journey back to London; and connecting links were to give the happenings on the way. But Chaucer completed only fragments of the work amounting in all to about a third of what he planned. Another famous collection of stories in a framework is the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, a book which Chaucer, despite his knowledge of Boccaccio's other writings, seems not to have known.

The Prologue introduces the pilgrims, met at the Tabard Inn at Southwark, just across London Bridge, ready to start the next morning. It is a masterly set of portraits; each pilgrim is typical of a class, and yet individualized as a real human being. There is the Prioress, with all the proprieties of the head-mistress of a school for young ladies, and the coarse but genial Wife of Bath; the rascally Pardoner and the ideal Parson of a parish. Both town and country life are represented. Together the company is representative of the whole social fabric of fourteenth-century England, from the Knight to the Plowman.

THE PROLOGUE

*Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of
Caunterbury*

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote ¹
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the
rote,

And bathed every veyne in swich ² licour,
Of which vertu ³ engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breath ⁵
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne, ⁴
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yē, ¹⁰
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages): ⁵
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers) for to seken straunge
strondes)

To ferne halwes, ⁶ couthe ⁷ in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende ¹⁵
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir ⁸ for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were
seke.

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay ²⁰

Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle ²⁵
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they
alle,

That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren
wyde,

And wel we weren esed ¹ atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste, ³⁰
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward ² erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse. ³⁵

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and
space,

Er that I fether in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what de-
gree; ⁴⁰

And eek in what array that they were
inne:

And at a knight than wol I first biginne.
A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy
man,

That fro the tyme that he first bigan

¹ sweet. ² such. ³ by virtue of which.

⁴ i.e. the time of year is mid-April.

⁵ dispositions.

⁶ distant saints.

⁷ famous.

⁸ St. Thomas à Becket.

¹ accommodated.

² agreement.

To ryden out, he loved chivalrye, 45
 Trouthe: and honour, freedom: and cur-
 teisy.

Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
 And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre) 3
 As wel in Cristendom as hethenese,
 And ever honoured for his worthinesse. 50

At Alisaundre he was, when it was wonne;
 Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne 4
 Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.⁵

In Lettow 6 hadde he reysed 7 and in Ruce,
 No Cristen man so ofte of his degree. 55

In Gernade 8 at the sege eek hadde he be

Of Algezir,⁹ and riden in Belmarye.¹⁰

At Lyeys 11 was he, and at Satalye,¹²

Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete

See 13

At many a noble armee 14 hadde he be. 60

At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,

And foughten for our feith at Tramissene 15

In listes thryes, and ay slayn his fo.

This ilke 16 worthy knight had been also

Somtyme with the lord of Palaty, 17 65

Ageyn 18 another hethen in Turkye:

And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.¹⁹

And though that he were worthy, he was wys,

And of his port as meke as is a mayde. 70

He never yet no vileinye 20 ne sayde

In al his lyf, un-to no maner night.

He was a verray parfit gentil knight. X

But for to tellen yow of his array,

His horsen were gode, but he was nat gay. 75

Of fustian 21 he wered a gipoun 22

Al bismotered with his habergeoun; 23

For he was late y-come from his viage,

And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

With him ther was his sone, a yong

SOVER,

A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler, 24 80

With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in

presse.²⁵

Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.

Of his stature he was of evene 26 lengthe,

And wonderly deliver, 27 and greet of

strengthe.

And he had been somtyme in chivachye, 28 85

In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,

1 loyalty. 2 generosity. 3 farther.

4 sat at the head of the table.

5 Prussia, i.e. East Prussia. 6 Lithuania.

7 made a campaign. 8 Grenada.

9 Algeiras, taken from the Moors in 1344.

10 A district in northern Africa.

11 A town in Armenia. 12 A town in Asia Minor.

13 Mediterranean. 14 expedition.

15 A district in northern Africa. 16 same.

17 A district in Asia Minor. 18 against.

19 high praise. 20 discourtesy.

21 coarse heavy cloth. 22 doublet.

23 stained by his coat of mail.

24 aspirant to knighthood.

25 curly as though artificially curled.

26 medium. 27 active. 28 military expeditions.

And born him wel, as of so litel space,
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.

Embrouded was he, as it were a mede 90

Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.

Singinge he was, or floytinge,¹ al the day;

He was as fresh as is the month of May.

Short was his goune, with sleeves longe and 95

wyde.

Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire 100

ryde.

He coude songes make and wel endyte,² 95

Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreie and

wryte.

So hote he lovede, that by nightertale 3

He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.

Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,

And carf 4 biforn his fader at the table. 100

A YEMAN 5 hadde he, and servaunts namo

At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;

And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;

A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene

Under his belt he bar ful thriftily; 105

(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:

His arwes drouped noght with fetheres

lowe),

And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.

A not-heed 6 hadde he, with a broun visage.

Of wode-craft wel coude 7 he al the usage. 110

Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,⁸

And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,

And on that other syde a gay daggere,

Harneised 9 wel, and sharp as point of spere;

A Cristofre 10 on his brest of silver shene.¹¹ 115

An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;

A forster 12 was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,

That of hir smyling was ful simple and

coy 13

Hir gretteste ooth was but by seynt Loy; 120

And she was cleped madame Eglyntyne.

Ful wel she song the service divyne,

Entuned in hir nose ful semely;

And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,¹⁴

After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,¹⁵ 125

For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.

At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;

She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,

Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.

Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel 130

kepe,

That no drope ne fille up-on her brest.

In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.¹⁶

1 whistling. 2 compose words and music.

3 night-time. 4 carved. 5 yeoman.

6 close-cropped head. 7 knew.

8 guard for the arm. 9 equipped.

10 image of St. Christopher, as protection against acci-

dens.

11 bright. 12 forester. 13 coy. 14 elegantly.

15 A convent-school near London. 16 desire.

Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe was no ferthing ¹ sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir
draughte. 135

Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,²
And sikerly she was of greet disport,³
And ful plesant, and amiable of port,
And peyned hir to countrefete chere ⁴
Of court, and been estatlich of manere, 140
And to ben holden digne ⁵ of reverence.
But, for to speken of hir conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or
bledde. 145

Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-
breed.⁶

But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte:⁷
And al was conscience and tendre herte. 150
Ful semely hir wimpel pinched ⁸ was;
Hir nose tretys;⁹ hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and
reed;

But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe; 155
For, hardily,¹⁰ she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis ¹¹ was hir cloke, as I was war.
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire ¹² of bedes, gauded al with grene;¹³
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful
shene, 160

On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Another NONNE with hir hadde she,
That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES
THREE.

A MONK ther was, a fair for the mais-
trye,¹⁴ 165

An out-rydere,¹⁵ that lovede venerye ¹⁶;
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in
stable:

And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel
here

Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere, 170
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.¹⁷

¹ smallest trace.

² reached.

³ And certainly she was full of pleasantry.

⁴ imitate the manners.

⁵ worthy.

⁶ cake-bread.

⁷ with a stick smartly.

⁸ pleated.

⁹ well formed.

¹⁰ certainly.

¹¹ handsome.

¹² string.

¹³ i.e. every eleventh bead was green. These larger
green beads in her rosary marked Paternosters. The
smaller coral beads marked Aves.

¹⁴ preëminently fine.

¹⁵ an inspector of the properties of his monastery.

¹⁶ hunting.

¹⁷ subordinate monastery.

The reule ¹ of seint Maure or of seint Benoit,
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,²
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace, 175
And held after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled ³ hen,
That seith, that hunters been nat holi men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees; 180
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;
And I seyde, his opinioun was good.
What sholde he studie, and make himselven
wood,⁴

Upon a book in cloistre alway to poure, 185
Or swinken ⁵ with his handes, and labour,
As Austin bit?⁶ How shal the world be
served?

Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therfore he was a pricasour ⁷ aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in
flight; 190

Of priking ⁸ and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleeves purfild ⁹ at the hond
With grys,¹⁰ and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chin, 195
He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pin:
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled,¹¹ that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point;¹² 200
His eyen stepe,¹³ and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;¹⁴
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certainly he was a fair prelat;
He was nat pale as a for-pyned ¹⁵ goost. 205
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a
merye,

A limitour,¹⁶ a ful solempne man.

In alle the ordres foure ¹⁷ is noon that
can ¹⁸ 210

So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge women, at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.¹⁹
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he 215
With frankeleyns ²⁰ over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy women of the toun:
For he had power of confessioun,

¹ The monastic regulations of the Benedictine order.

² somewhat strict.

³ plucked.

⁴ crazy.

⁵ labor.

⁶ as St. Augustine bids.

⁷ man fond of riding.

⁸ riding.

⁹ trimmed.

¹⁰ fur.

¹¹ bald.

¹² physical condition.

¹³ bright.

¹⁴ shone like the fire under a cauldron.

¹⁵ tormented.

¹⁶ A friar licensed to beg in a limited district.

¹⁷ Dominican, Franciscan, Carmelite, Augustinian.

¹⁸ knows.

¹⁹ pillar.

²⁰ well-to-do land-owners.

As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
 For of his ordre he was licentiat. 220
 Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
 He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
 Ther as he wiste to han¹ a good pitaunce;
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive 225
 Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.
 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,² 2
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt.³
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,
 He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore
 smerte. 230
 Therefore, in stede of weping and preyeris,
 Men moot⁴ yeve silver to the povre freres.
 His tipet was ay farsed⁵ ful of knyves
 And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
 And certainly he hadde a mery note; 235
 Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.⁶
 Of yeddinges⁷ he bar utterly the prys.
 His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
 Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun, 240
 And everich hostiler and tappestere
 Bet than a lazor or a beggestere;⁸
 For un-to swich a worthy man as he
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,⁹
 To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce. 245
 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
 For to delen with no swich poraille,¹⁰
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
 And over-al, ther as¹¹ profit sholde aryse,
 Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse. 250
 Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.¹²
 He was the beste beggere in his hous;
 For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,¹³
 So plesaunt was his "*In principio*,"¹⁴ 255
 Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente.
 His purchas was wel bettre than his
 rente.¹⁵ 260
 And rage¹⁶ he coude, as it were right a
 whelp.¹⁷
 In love-days¹⁸ ther coude he muchel helpe.
 For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,¹⁹
 With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scolere, 260
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
 Of double worsted was his semi-cope,²⁰
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
 Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse,

To make his English swete up-on his
 tonge; 265
 And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
 His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
 As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
 This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.
 A MARCHANT was ther with a forked
 berd, 270
 In mottelee,¹ and hye on horse he sat,
 Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;
 His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
 His resons he spak ful solempnely,
 Souninge² alway th'encrees of his win-
 ning. 275
 He wolde the see were kept for any thing³
 Bitwixe Middleburgh and Orewelle.⁴
 Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.⁵
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;⁶
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette, 280
 So estatly was he of his governaunce,
 With his bargaynes, and with his chevi-
 saunce.⁷
 For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
 But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle.
 A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also, 285
 That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.
 As lene was his hors as is a rake,
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtiepy;⁸ 290
 For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
 Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.
 For him was lever⁹ have at his beddes heed
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye, 295
 Than robes riche, or fithele,¹⁰ or gay sautrye.¹¹
 But al be that he was a philosopre,
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;¹²
 But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,¹³
 On bokes and on lerninge he it spente, 300
 And bisily gan for the soules preye
 Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.¹⁴
 Of studie took he most cure¹⁵ and most
 hede.
 Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
 And that was seyde in forme and rever-
 ence, 305
 And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.¹⁶
 Souninge in¹⁷ moral vertu was his speche,
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

1 Where he knew he should have. 2 boast.
 3 one should. 4 stuffed. 5 fiddle. 6 songs.
 7 Better than he did any leper or beggar-woman.
 8 It was not fitting to a man of his importance.
 9 poor trash. 10 And everywhere where.
 11 of such ability. 12 shoe.
 13 The first words of St. John's gospel.
 14 His occasional winnings amounted to more than his regular income.
 15 romp. 16 young dog.
 17 days for settling minor disputes.
 18 recluse. 19 short cape. 20 clothes-press.

1 cloth of a mixed color.
 2 relating to. 3 guarded at all costs.
 4 Ports in Holland and England.
 5 sell currency at exchange. 6 employed.
 7 financial dealings. 8 short overcoat.
 9 he preferred. 10 fiddle.
 11 psaltery (musical instrument).
 12 His scientific knowledge (philosophy) did not include alchemy.
 13 get. 14 go to school. 15 care.
 16 lofty maxims. 17 tending towards.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvys,¹ 310
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
Justyce he was ful often in assyse,
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun; 315
For his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour² was no-wher noon.
Al was fee simple to him in effect,³
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.⁴ 320
He noon so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,⁵
That from the tyme of king William were
falle.

Therto he coude endyte, and make a
thing,⁶ 325
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.⁷
He rood but hoonly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint⁸ of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale. 330

A FRANKLEYN⁹ was in his companye;
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.
Of his complexioun¹⁰ he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.¹¹
To live in delyt was ever his wone,¹² 335
For he was Epicurus owne sone,
That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
Was verraily felicittee parfyt.
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian¹³ he was in his contree. 340
His breed, his ale, was always after oon;¹⁴
A better envyned¹⁵ man was no-wher noon.
With-oute bake mete¹⁶ was never his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
It snewed¹⁷ in his hous of mete and
drinke, 345

Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in
mewe,¹⁸
And many a breem and many a luce in
stewe.¹⁹ 350

Wo was his cook,¹ but-if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
His table dormant² in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessionns ther was he lord and sire; 355
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.³
An anlas⁴ and a gipser⁵ al of silk
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;⁶
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.⁷ 360
An HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,
A WEBBE, a DYERE, and a TAPICER,⁸
Were with us eek, clothed in o liverie,⁹
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.¹⁰
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked¹¹
was; 365

Hir knyves were y-chaped¹² noght with bras,
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,
Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys.¹³ 370
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
Was shaply for to been an alderman.
For catel¹⁴ hadde they y-nogh and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certein were they to blame. 375
It is ful fair to been y-clept "*ma dame*,"
And goon to vigilyës¹⁵ al bifore,
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

A Cook they hadde with hem for the nones
To boille the chiknes with the marybones, 380
And poudre-marchant tart,¹⁶ and galingale.¹⁷
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London
ale.

He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and
frye,
Maken mortreux,¹⁸ and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me, 385
That on his shine a mormal¹⁹ hadde he;
For blankmanger,²⁰ that made he with the
beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning fer by
weste: 21

For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood up-on a rouncy,²² as he couthe,²³ 390
In a gowne of falding²⁴ to the knee.
A daggere hanging on a laas²⁵ hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;

1 The porch of St. Paul's, where lawyers met for consultation.

2 conveyancer.

3 He could set aside any entail, and convey the property as though it were held in fee simple.

4 invalidated.

5 He could cite cases and decisions word for word.

6 compose and write out a legal document.

7 knew he fully by heart.

8 girdle.

9 rich land-owner.

10 temperament.

11 wine with bread or cake in it.

12 custom.

13 Patron saint of hospitality.

14 i.e. it never varied in quality.

15 provided with wine.

16 cooked food.

17 snowed.

18 a coop.

19 fish-pond.

1 It was a bad day for his cook.

2 permanent dining-table — not boards on trestles.

3 member of Parliament for the county.

4 dagger.

5 purse.

6 auditor.

7 A feudal tenant ranking immediately below a baron.

8 upholsterer.

9 distinctive dress.

10 guild.

11 trimmed.

12 mounted.

13 in a guild-hall on a dais.

14 property.

15 eves of festival days.

16 tart flavoring-powder.

17 A variety of spice.

18 stews.

19 sore.

20 creamed chicken.

21 dwelling far in the west.

22 an awkward nag.

23 as well as he knew how.

24 coarse cloth.

25 cord.

And, certainly, he was a good felawe. 395
 Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
 From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman
 sleep.¹

Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
 If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
 By water he sente hem hoom to every
 land.² 400

But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
 His stremes³ and his daungers him bisydes,
 His herberwe⁴ and his mone, his lodemenage,⁵
 Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.⁶
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertake; 405
 With many a tempest hadde his berd been
 shake.

He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
 From Gootland⁷ to the cape of Finistere,
 And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;
 His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne. 410

With us ther was a DOCTOR OF PHISYK,
 In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
 To speke of phisik and of surgerie;
 For he was grounded in astronomye.

He kepte his pacient a ful greet del 415
 In houres, by his magik naturel.⁸
 Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
 Of his images⁹ for his pacient.

He knew the cause of everich maladye,
 Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or
 drye.¹⁰ 420

And where engendred, and of what humour;
 He was a verrey parfit practisour.

The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,
 Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.¹¹

Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries, 425
 To sende him drogges and his letuaries,¹²
 For ech of hem made oþer for to winne;
 Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.

Wel knew he th'olde Esculapius,
 And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus, 430
 Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
 Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;

Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;
 Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.¹³

Of his diete mesurable was he, 435
 For it was of no superfluitee,
 But of greet norissing and digestible.
 His studie was but litel on the bible.

1 He had stolen many a drink of the wine which he was bringing from Bordeaux, while the supercargo was asleep.
 2 made them walk the plank.

3 currents. 4 harborage.
 5 steersmanship. 6 Carthagina in Spain.

7 The island of Götland in the Baltic.
 8 He knew which hours were astrologically favorable for giving medicine.

9 He devised magic images at a moment when astrologically fortunate planets were rising.

10 The four primary elements which composed all matter.

11 remedy. 12 syrups.
 13 The chief authorities on medieval medicine.

In sangwin and in pers¹ he clad was al,
 Lynced with taffata and with sendal;² 440
 And yet he was but esy of dispence;³
 He kepte that he wan in pestilence.

For gold in phisik is a cordial,⁴
 Therefore he lovede gold in special

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE, 445
 But she was som-del⁵ deef, and that was
 scathe.⁶

Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,⁷
 She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.

In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
 That to th'offring bifore hir sholde goon; 450
 And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was
 she,

That she was out of alle charitee.

Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;⁸

I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound

That on a Sonday were upon hir heed. 455

Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,

Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and
 newe.

Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of
 hewe.

She was a worthy womman al hir lyve.

Housbondes at chirche-dore⁹ she hadde
 fyve, 460

Withouten¹⁰ other companye in youthe;

But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.¹¹

And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem;

She hadde passed many a straunge streem;

At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne, 465

In Galice at saint Jame,¹² and at Coloigne.

She coude muche of wandring by the weye:

Gat-tothed¹³ was she, soothly for to seye.

Up-on an amblere¹⁴ esily she sat,

Y-wimpled¹⁵ wel, and on hir heed an hat 470

As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;

A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,

And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.

In felawship wel coude she laughe and
 carpe.¹⁶

Of remedyes of love she knew perchaunce, 475

For she coude of that art the olde daunce.¹⁷

A good man was ther of religioun,

And was a povre PERSOUN¹⁸ of a toun;

But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.

He was also a lerned man, a clerk, 480

That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;

His parisshe¹⁹ devoutly wolde he teche.

1 blood-red and light blue. 2 thin silk.

3 careful about spending. 4 heart-stimulant.

5 somewhat. 6 a pity. 7 skill.

8 of very fine texture.

9 Weddings were celebrated in the porch of the church.

10 Besides. 11 just now.

12 Compostella, a great pilgrim shrine in Spain.

13 With teeth set wide apart. 14 ambling nag.

15 provided with a pleated head-covering. 16 talk.

17 She knew all the tricks in the game of love.

18 parson. 19 parishioners.

Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient;
 And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.¹ 485
 Ful looth were him to cursen for his thythes,
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
 Un-to his povre parisshe aboute
 Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
 He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce. 490
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer
 a-sonder,

But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknes nor in meschief,² to visyte
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and
 lyte,³

Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf. 495
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he
 taughte;

Out of the gospel⁴ he tho wordes caughte;
 And this figure he added eek ther-to,
 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do? 500
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewed⁵ man to ruste;
 And shame it is, if a preest take keep,⁶
 A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive, 505
 By his clenness, how that his sheep shold
 live.

He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
 And ran to London, un-to sēynt Poules,
 To seken him a chaunterie for soules,⁷ 510
 Or with a bretherhe to been withholde;⁸
 But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his
 folde,

So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;
 He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
 And though he holy were, and virtuous, 515
 He was to sinful man nat despitous,
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,⁹
 But in his teching discreet and benigne.
 To drawn folk to heaven by fairnesse
 By good ensample, was his bisnesse: 520
 But it were any persone obstinat,
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
 Him wolde he snibben¹⁰ sharply for the
 nones.

A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
 He wayted after no pompe and reverence, 525
 Ne maked him a spyced conscience,¹¹
 But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
 He taughte, and first he folwed it himselve.

With him ther was a Plowman, was his
 brother,
 That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a
 fother,¹ 530

A trewe swinker² and a good was he,
 Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
 God loved he best with al his hole herte
 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,³
 And thanne his neighebour right as him-
 selve. 535

He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and
 delve,

For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
 Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.
 His thythes payed he ful faire and wel,
 Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.⁴ 540
 In a tabard⁵ he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a Reve⁶ and a Millere,
 A Somnour⁷ and a Pardoner⁸ also,
 A Maunciple,⁹ and my-self; ther were namo.

The MILLER was a stout carl, for the
 nones, 545

Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;
 That proved wel,¹⁰ for over-al ther he cam,
 At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.¹¹
 He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke
 knarre,¹²

Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of
 harre,¹³ 550

Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
 His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
 And ther-to brood, as though it were a
 spade.

Up-on the cop¹⁴ right of his nose he hade
 A werthe, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres, 555
 Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
 His nose-thirles¹⁵ blake were and wyde.
 A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;
 His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
 He was a janglere and a goliardeys,¹⁶ 560
 And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.¹⁷
 Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes;¹⁸
 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold,¹⁹ pardee.
 A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
 A baggepype wel coude he blowe and
 sowne, 565

And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.

1 load.

2 worker.

3 though his lot was pleasant or unpleasant.

4 by giving both personal services and property.

5 a sleeveless jerkin.

6 steward of a landed estate.

7 An officer who summoned offenders to the ecclesiastical courts.

8 a hawk of papal indulgences.

9 steward of a college.

10 that was clearly proved.

11 i.e. the prize.

12 knotty muscled fellow.

13 hinge.

14 tip.

15 nostrils.

16 an idle talker and teller of coarse stories.

17 ribaldries.

18 take triple toll.

19 i.e. he was expert in judging the quality of flour.

1 times. 2 misfortune.

3 of high estate and low.

4 St. Matthew, v, 19.

5 lay.

6 heed.

7 To seek the easy work of merely saying masses for the repose of departed souls.

8 to be chaplain for a guild.

9 overbearing nor haughty.

10 rebuke.

11 He did not exaggerate small peccadillos.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,¹
Of which achatours² mighte take exemple
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille
For whether that he payde, or took by
taille,³ 570

Algate he wayted so in his achat,⁴
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men? 575
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious;
Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous
Worthy to ben stiwardes of rente and
lond

Of any lord that is in Engeland, 580
To make him live by his propre good,
In honour detteles, but he were wood,⁵
Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any cas that mighte falle or happe; 585
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.⁶

The REVE was a sclendre colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.⁷ 590
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;
Ther was noon auditour coude on him
winne.⁸

Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the
reyn, 595

The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.
His lordes sheep, his neet,⁹ his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor,¹⁰ and his pul-
trye,

Was hoolly in this reves governing,
And by his covenant yaf the rekening, 600
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.¹¹
Ther nas baillif, ne herde,¹² ne other hyne,¹³
That he ne knew his sleighte and his
covyne;¹⁴

They were adrad of him, as of the deeth. 605
His woning¹⁵ was ful fair up-on an heeth,
With grene treës shadwed was his place.
He coude bettre than his lord purchase.
Ful riche he was astored prively,
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly, 610
To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.

In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;¹
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,² 615
That was al pomely³ grey, and highte
Scot.

A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,
Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle. 620
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

A SOMNOUR was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawcefleem⁴ he was, with eyen narwe.⁵ 625
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a spärwe;
With scalled⁶ browes blake, and piled⁷ berd;
Of his visage children were aferd.

Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimston,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon, 630
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That him mighte helpen of his whelkes⁸
whyte,

Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as
blood. 635

Than wolde he speke, and crye as he were
wood.⁹

And whan that he wel dronken hadde the
wyn,

Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of som decree; 640
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
And eek ye knowen wel, how that a jay
Can clepen "Watte,"¹⁰ as well as can the
pope.

But who-so coude in other thing him grope,¹¹
Thanne hadde he spent al his philoso-
phye; 645

Ay "Questio quid iuris." wolde he crye.
He was a gentil harlot¹² and a kinde;
A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde.
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to have his concubyn 650
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:
Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.¹³
And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe,
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes¹⁴ curs, 655
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde y-punished be.
"Purs is the erchedeknes helle," seyde he.

1 One of the inns of court, a college of lawyers.

2 buyers. 3 on account.

4 He always looked out so well for his purchase.

5 unless he were crazy. 6 made fools of them all.

7 His hair was cut short in front like a priest's.

8 get the better of him. 9 cattle. 10 stock.

11 catch him in arrears 12 herdsman.

13 hired laborer. 14 deceitfulness. 15 dwelling.

1 trade. 2 horse. 3 dappled.

4 pimped. 5 set close together. 6 scabby.

7 thin and uneven. 8 pimples. 9 crazy.

10 Wat, short for Walter, was a common name for jays, as Polly for modern parrots.

11 examine. 12 rogue. 13 fleece a gull.

14 The archdeacon presided over the bishop's court.

But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
Of cursing¹ oghte ech gilty man him
drede — 660

For curs wol slee, right as assoilling²
saveth —

And also war him of a *significavit*.³
In daunger⁴ hadde he at his owne gyse
The yonge girles⁵ of the diocyse,
And knew hir counseil, and was al hir
reed. 665

A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale-stake;⁶
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

With him ther rood a gentil **PARDONER**
Of Rouncival,⁷ his freend and his compeer,⁸ 670
That streight was comen fro the court of
Rome.

Ful loude he song, "Com hider, love, to me."
This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,⁹
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.

This pardonier hadde heer as yelow as
wex, 675

But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of
flox;

By ounces⁹ henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;
But thinne it lay, by colpons¹⁰ oon and oon;
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon, 680
For it was trussed up in his walet.

Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe jet;¹¹
Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe even hadde he as an hare.
A vernicle¹² hadde he sowed on his cappe. 685

His wale lay biforn him in his lappe,
Bret-ful¹³ of pardoun come from Rome al
hoot.

A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,

As smothe it was as it were late y-shave; 690
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.

But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardonier.

For in his male¹⁴ he hadde a pilwe-beer,¹⁵
Which that, he seyde, was our lady¹⁶
veyl: 695

He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That seynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til Jesu Crist him hente.

He hadde a croys of latoun,¹⁷ ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones. 700

But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person¹ dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes
tweye.

And thus, with feyned flaterye and
japes,² 705

He made the person and the peple his
apes.

But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest³ he song an offertorie; 710
For wel he wiste, whan that song was
songe,

He moste preche, and wel affyle⁴ his tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause, 715
Th'estat, th'array, the nombre, and eek the
cause

Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.

But now is tyme to yow for to telle 720

How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.

And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.

But first I pray yow, of your curteisye, 725
That ye n'arette it nat my vileinye,⁵
Thogh that I pleylnly speke in this matere,

To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.

For this ye knowen al-so wel as I, 730
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,

Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;⁶

Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe 735
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.

He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his
brother;

He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,

And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it. 740
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.

Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree⁷

Here in this tale, as that they sholde
stonde; 745

My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,

And to the soper sette us anon;

1 parson. 2 tricks. 3 best of all. 4 polish.
5 That you do not attribute it to lack of good manners
on my part.

6 broadly. 7 in order of social rank.

1 ecclesiastical condemnation. 2 absolution.

3 A writ of excommunication.

4 under his power. 5 young people of both sexes.

6 sign of an ale-house. 7 A hospital in London.

8 bass accompaniment. 9 small portions.

10 shreds. 11 the latest fashion.

12 A copy of the handkerchief of St. Veronica, on which

was miraculously imprinted the face of Christ.

13 brim-full. 14 bag.

15 pillowslip.

16 i.e. the blessed Virgin's

17 latten, a composition metal similar to brass.

And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us
leste.¹ 750

A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,²
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:³
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel
y-taught, 755

And of manhod him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our reken-
inges; 760

And seyde thus: "Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my wrothe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe⁴ as is now. 765
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.

Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede.⁵ 770
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen⁶ and to pleye;
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doun as a stoon;
And therefore wol I maken yow disport, 775
As I seyde erst,⁷ and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my jugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye, 780
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche."

Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;⁸
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it
wys,⁹ 785

And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.

"Lordinges," quod he, "now herkneth
for the beste;

But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and
pleyn, 790

That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of adventures that whylom han bifale. 795
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,

That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas,¹
Shal have a soper at our aller cost²
Here in this place, sitting by this post, 800
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
And who-so wol my jugement withseye³ 805
Shal paye all that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-uten wordes mo,⁴
And I wol erly shape me⁵ therfore."

This thing was graunted, and our othes
swore 810

With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys; 815
And we wold reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lowe;⁶ and thus, by oon assent,
We been acorded to his jugement.
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet⁷ anon;
We dronken, and to reste wente echon, 820
With-uten any lenger taryinge.

A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,⁸
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel more than pas,⁹ 825
Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.¹⁰
And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde; "Lordinges, herkneth, if yow
leste.

Ye woot your forward,¹¹ and I it yow
recorde.

If even-song and morwe-song acorde,¹² 830
Lat see now who shal telle the firste tale.

As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my jugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.

Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer
twinne;¹³ 835

He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.
Sire knight," quod he, "my maister and my
lord,

Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.
Cometh neer," quod he, "my lady prioress;
And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfast-
nesse, 840

1 most instructive and entertaining.

2 at the cost of us all. 3 dispute.

4 more. 5 make my arrangements.

6 i.e. in everything. 7 fetched in.

8 the cock who waked us all.

9 faster than a walk.

10 A place two miles from Southwark.

11 agreement.

12 If you sing the same tune now that you did last evening.

13 Now draw lots before we get any further from town.

1 we were disposed.

2 bright.

3 Cheapside, London.

4 inn.

5 give you your reward.

6 tell stories.

7 before.

8 It did not take us long to agree.

9 to be particular about.

Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man."
 Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
 And shortly for to tellen, as it was,
 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,¹
 The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight, 845
 Of which ful blythe and glad was every
 wight;

And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
 By forward and by composicioun,²
 As ye han hard; what nedeth wordes mo?
 And whan this gode man saugh it was so, 850
 As he that wys was and obedient
 To kepe his forward by his free assent,
 He seyde: "Sin I shal beginne the game,
 What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
 Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I
 seye." 855

And with that word we riden forth our
 weye;

And he bigan with right a mery chere
 His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

Here endeth the prolog of this book

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

This tale of the Cock and the Fox is a beast-fable, from the great medieval cycle of *Reynard the Fox*, told to impress the moral: "Beware of flatterers." In Chaucer's hands it has become much more than this — a mock-heroic epic, elaborated with the most delicious wit and humor. Chauntecleer is a royal prince, whose predestined fate is foretold by a warning dream, the significance of which he pedantically expounds with full medieval dialectic for the benefit of his favorite wife. But the scene is laid at the humble dwelling of a poor peasant woman, who owns this princely bird; and Chaucer never lets the reader forget that his hero is after all only a very "cocky" cock.

*Here biginneth the Nonne Preestes Tale of the
 Cok and Hen, Chauntecleer and Pertelote.*

A povre widwe, somdel stape³ in age,
 Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
 Bisyde a grove, stonding in a dale.
 This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
 Sin filke day that she was last a wyf, 5
 In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
 For litel was hir catel⁴ and hir rente;
 By housbondrye,⁵ of such as God hir sente,
 She fond⁶ hir-self, and eek hir doghteren two.
 Thre large sowes hadde she, and namo, 10
 Thre kyn, and eek a sheep that highte
 Malle,

Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halfe,

1 by hap, or fate, or chance.

2 agreement and contract.

4 property.

5 economy.

3 advanced.

6 provided for.

In which she eet ful many a splendre meel.
 Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
 No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir
 throte; 15

Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
 Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;
 Attempree¹ dyete was al hir phisyk,
 And excerseye, and hertes suffisaunce.
 The goute lette hir no-thing² for to daunce,
 N'apoplexye shente³ nat hir heed; 21
 No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed;
 Hir bord was served most with whyt and
 blak,

Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no
 lak,

Seynd⁴ bacoun, and somtyme an ey⁵ or
 tweye, 25

For she was as it were a maner deye.⁶

A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
 With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,
 In which she hadde a cok, hight Chauntecleer,

In al the land of crowing nas his peer. 30

His vois was merier than the mery orgon

On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;

Wel sikerer⁷ was his crowing in his logge,

Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.⁸

By nature knew he ech ascencioun 35

Of equinoxial in thilke toun;

For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,⁹

Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben
 amended.

His comb was redder than the fyn coral,

And batailed, as it were a castel-wal. 40

His bile was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;

Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;

His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,

And lyk the burned gold was his colour.

This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce 45

Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,

Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,

And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.

Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte

Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote. 50

Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,

And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,

Sin thilke day that she was seven night
 old,

That trewely she hath the herte in hold

Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith; 55

He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.

But such a joye was it to here hem singe,

Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,

In swete accord, "my lief is faren in londe."

For thilke tyme, as I have understonde, 60

1 temperate.

3 injured.

6 dairywoman.

8 time-piece.

2 did not hinder her at all.

4 broiled.

7 more reliable.

9 i.e. every hour.

10 limb.

Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.

And so bifel, that in a daweninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote, 65
This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched¹ sore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde him
rore,

She was agast, and seyde, "O herte dere,
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere? 70
Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!"
And he answerde and seyde thus, "madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:
By god, me mette² I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is sore
afright.

Now god," quod he, "my swevene recche³
aright,

And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a beste,
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad
areste 80

Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen
tweye. 85

Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
This caused me my groning, doutelees."

"Avoy!" quod she, "fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas!" quod she, "for, by that god above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love; 90
I can nat love a coward, by my feith.

For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,⁴
And scree, and no nigard, ne no fool, 95
Ne him that is agast of every tool,⁵
Ne noon avauntour,⁶ by that god above!

How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your love,
That any thing mighte make yow aferd?

Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd? 100
Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis?
No-thing, god wot, but vanitee,⁷ in sweven
is.

Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,⁸
And ofte of fume,⁹ and of complecciouns,¹⁰
Whan humours been to habundant in a
wight. 105

Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-
night,

Cometh of the grete superfluitee
Of youre rede colera,¹ pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes
Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes,² 110
Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of contek,³ and of whelpes grete and lyte;
Right as the humour of malencolye⁴
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles blake, 115
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours coude I telle also,
That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.

Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a
man, 120
Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors⁵ of dremes?
Now, sire," quod she, "whan we flee fro the
bemes,

For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye, 125
That bothe of colere and of malencolye
Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I shal my-self to herbes techen yow,
That shul ben for your hele, and for your
prow;⁶ 130

And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,⁷
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for goddes owene love!
Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun. 135

Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane. 140
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
Of lauriol,⁸ centaure,⁹ and fumetere,¹⁰
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of catapuçe,¹¹ or of gaytres beryis,¹² 145
Of erbe yve,¹³ growing in our yerd, that mery
is;

Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete
hem in.

Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow namore."

"Madame," quod he, "graunt mercy¹⁴ of
your lore. 150

But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By god, men may in olde bokes rede

1 troubled. 2 I dreamed. 3 interpret my dream.
4 generous. 5 weapon. 6 boaster.
7 emptiness. 8 Dreams come from over-eating.
9 gas on the stomach.
10 mixtures of the humors which compose the body.

1 red bile, one of the four humors. 2 flames.
3 strife. 4 black bile. 5 pay no attention to.
6 advantage. 7 nature. 8 spurge-laurel.
9 centaury. 10 fumitory. 11 caper-spurge.
12 dogwood. 13 ground ivy. 14 many thanks.

Of many a man, more of auctoritee 155
 Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,¹
 That al the revers seyn of his sentence,
 And han wel founden by experience,
 That dremes ben significaciouns,
 As wel of joye as tribulaciouns 160
 That folk enduren in this lyf present.
 Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
 The verray preve sheweth it in dede.
 Oon of the gretteste auctours that men
 rede²
 Seith thus, that whylom two felawes
 wente 165
 On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
 And happed so, thay come into a toun,
 Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
 Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage³
 That they ne founde as muche as o cotage 170
 In which they bothe mighte y-logged be.
 Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
 As for that night, departen campaigne;
 And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
 And took his logging as it wolde falle. 175
 That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
 Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
 That other man was logged wel y-nough,
 As was his aventure, or his fortune,
 That us governeth alle as in commune. 180
 And so bifel, that, longe er it were day,
 This man mette⁴ in his bed, ther-as he lay,
 How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
 And seyde, 'allas! for in an oxes stalle
 This night I shal be mordred ther I lye. 185
 Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;
 In alle haste com to me,' he sayde.
 This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde;⁵
 But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
 He turned him, and took of this no keep;⁶ 190
 Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
 Thus twyfes in his sleping dremed he.
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
 Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am now
 slawe;
 Bihold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde!
 Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde, 196
 And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,
 'A carte ful of dong ther shaltow see,
 In which my body is hid ful prively;
 Do thilke carte aresten boldly. 200
 My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;
 And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
 And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day, 205
 To his felawes in he took the way;

And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
 After his felawe he bigan to calle.
 The hostiler answered him anon,
 And seyde, 'sire, your felawe is agon, 210
 As sone as day he wente out of the toun.'
 This man gan fallen in suspeioun,
 Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,⁷
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond 215
 A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
 That was arrayed in the same wyse
 As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
 Vengeance and justice of this felonye: — 220
 'My felawe mordred is this same night,
 And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.
 I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,
 'That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
 Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!' 225
 What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn?
 The peple out-sterre, and caste the cart to
 grounde,
 And in the middel of the dong they founde
 The dede man, that mordred was al newe.
 O blisful god, that art so just and trewe! 230
 Lo, how that thou biwreyest⁸ mordre alway!
 Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
 Mordre is so wlatson³ and abhominable
 To god, that is so just and resonable,
 That he ne wol nat suffre it heled⁴ be; 235
 Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
 Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
 And right anoon, ministres of that toun
 Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,⁵
 And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,⁶ 240
 That thay biknewe⁷ hir wikkednesse anoon,
 And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.
 Here may men seen that dremes been to
 drede.
 And certes, in the same book I rede,
 Right in the nexte chapitre after this, 245
 (I gabbe⁸ nat, so have I joye or blis,)
 Two men that wolde han passed over see,
 For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
 If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
 That made hem in a citee for to tarie, 250
 That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.
 But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,
 The wind gan change, and blew right as
 hem leste.
 Jolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,
 And casten hem ful erly for to saille; 255
 But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.
 That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
 Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day;

¹ prosper.² Cicero.³ so limited in its lodging places.⁴ dreamed.⁵ started up in fright.⁶ paid no attention to it.¹ delay.² concealed.³ confessed.⁴ revealed.⁵ tortured.⁶ speak idly.³ disgusting.⁶ racked.

Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes
 syde,
 And him comaunded, that he sholde
 abyde, 260
 And seyde him thus, 'if thou to-morwe wende,
 Thou shalt be dreynt;¹ my tale is at an ende.'
 He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
 And preyde him his viage for to lette;²
 As for that day, he preyde him to abyde. 265
 His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
 Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
 'No dreem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte
 agaste,
 That I wol lette for to do my thinges.
 I sette not a straw by thy dreminges, 270
 For swevenes been but vanitees and japes.³
 Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
 And eke of many a mase⁴ therewithal;
 Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal.
 But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde, 275
 And thus for-sleuthen⁵ wilfully thy tyde,
 God wot it reweth me;⁶ and have good day.'
 And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
 But er that he hadde halfe his cours y-seyled,
 Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it
 eyled, 280
 But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
 And ship and man under the water wente
 In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
 That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
 And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere, 285
 By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
 That no man sholde been to recchelees
 Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
 That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.
 Lo, in the lyf of saint Kenelm, I rede, 290
 That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
 Of Mercenrike,⁷ how Kenelm mette a thing;
 A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,
 His mordre in his avisioun he say,
 His norice him expouned every del 295
 His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel
 For traisoun; but he nas but seven year
 old,
 And therefore litel tale hath he told
 Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
 By god, I hadde lever than my sherte 300
 That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
 Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
 Macrobeus,⁸ that writ th' avisioun
 In Affrike of the worthy Cipiou, n,
 Affermeth dremes, and seith that they
 been 305
 Warning of thinges that men after seen.

And further-more, I pray yow loketh wel
 In th' olde testament, of Daniel,
 If he held dremes any vanitee.
 Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see 310
 Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle)
 Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
 Loke of Egipt the king, daun¹ Pharao,
 His bakere and his boteler also,
 Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes. 315
 Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes,²
 May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.

Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,
 Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
 Which signified he sholde anhangd be? 320
 Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
 That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
 She dremed on the same night biforn,
 How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,
 If thilke day he wente in-to bataille; 325
 She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
 He wente for to fighte nathelees,
 But he was slayn anon of Achilles.
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
 And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle. 330
 Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
 That I shal han of this avisioun
 Adversitee; and I seye further-more,
 That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,
 For they ben venimous, I woot it wel; 335
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.

Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte al
 this;

Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
 Of o thing god hath sent me large grace;
 For whan I see the beautee of your face, 340
 Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,
 It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
 For, also siker³ as *In principio*,⁴
Mulier est hominis confusio;

Madame, the sentence of this Latin is — 345
 Womman is mannes joye and al his blis.
 For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
 Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
 For that our perche is maad so narwe,
 alas!

I am so ful of joye and of solas 350
 That I defye bothe sweven and dreem."
 And with that word he fleydoun fro the
 beam,

For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
 And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
 For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd. 355
 Royal he was, he was namore aferd;
 He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
 And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.

1 drowned. 2 delay. 3 jokes.

4 confused matter. 5 waste in idleness.

6 I lament it. 7 Mercia, i.e. central England.

8 Author of a commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*

1 lord. 2 realms. 3 just as sure.

4 The first words of St. John's Gospel. The following line means, "woman is man's undoing." Chauntecleer deliberately mistranslates it.

He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
 And on his toos he rometh up and doun, ³⁶⁰
 Him deynd not to sette his foot to grounde.
 He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
 And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
 Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
 Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture; ³⁶⁵
 And after wol I telle his aventure.

Whan that the month in which the world
 bigan,¹

That highte March, whan god first maked
 man,

Was complet, and passed were also,
 Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two,² ³⁷⁰
 Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
 His seven wyves walking by his syde,
 Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
 That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
 Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat
 more; ³⁷⁵

And knew by kynde,³ and by noon other lore,
 That it was pryme,⁴ and crew with blisful
 stevene.

"The sonne," he sayde, "is clomben up on
 hevene

Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.
 Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis, ³⁸⁰
 Herkneþ thise blisful briddes how they singe,
 And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
 Ful is myn herte of revel and solas."

But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;
 For ever the latter ende of joye is wo. ³⁸⁵
 God woot that worldly joye is sone ago;
 And if a rethor⁵ coude faire endyte,
 He in a cronique saufly mighte it wryte,
 As for a sovereyn notabilitee.

Now every wys man, lat him herkne me; ³⁹⁰
 This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake,
 As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,⁶
 That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
 Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.

A col-fox,⁷ ful of sly iniquitee, ³⁹⁵
 That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,
 By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,⁸
 The same night thurgh-out the hegges brast
 Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
 Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire; ⁴⁰⁰
 And in a bed of wortes⁹ stille he lay,
 Til it was passed undern¹⁰ of the day,
 Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
 As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,
 That in awayt ligen to mordre men. ⁴⁰⁵
 O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!

O newe Scariot, newe Genilon!¹
 False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
 That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
 O Chauntecleer, cursed be that morwe, ⁴¹⁰
 That thou into that yerd flough fro the
 bemes!

Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
 That thilke day was perilous to thee.
 But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,²
 After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis. ⁴¹⁵
 Witnesse on him, that any perfit clerk is,
 That in scole is gret altercacioun

In this matere, and greet disputisoun,
 And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.
 But I ne can not bulte it to the bren, ⁴²⁰
 As can the holy doctour Augustyn,
 Or Boëce,³ or the bishop Bradwardyn,⁴
 Whether that goddes worthy forwiting
 Streyneth⁵ me nedely for to doon a thing,
 (Nedely clepe I simple necessitee); ⁴²⁵

Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
 To do that same thing, or do it noght,
 Though god forwoot it, er that it was wrought;
 Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
 But by necessitee condicionel. ⁴³⁰

I wol not han to do of swich matere;
 My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
 That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
 To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
 That he had met the drem, that I yow
 tolde. ⁴³⁵

Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde;⁶
 Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,
 And made Adam fro paradys to go;
 Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese. —
 But for I noot, to whom it mighte dis-
 plese, ⁴⁴⁰

If I counseil of wommen wolde blame,
 Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
 Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich
 matere,

And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.
 Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat
 myne; ⁴⁴⁵

I can noon harm of no womman divyne. —

Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
 Lyth Pertelote; and alle hir sustres by,
 Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
 Song merier than the mermayde in the see;
 For Physiologus⁷ seith sikerly, ⁴⁵¹
 How that they singen wel and merily.
 And so bifel that, as he caste his yē,
 Among the wortes, on a boterflye,

1 The earth was created at the spring equinox.

2 i.e. it was May 3.

3 nature.

4 nine A.M.

5 master of rhetoric.

6 One of the Arthurian romances.

7 fox with black markings.

8 Predestined by the mind of God.

9 vegetables.

10 middle of the morning.

1 Judas Iscariot, and Ganelon, traitor in the Song of Roland.

2 What God foreknows must needs be.

3 Boethius.

4 English theologian of fourteenth century.

5 constraineth.

6 disastrous.

7 A fabulous book on the habits of animals.

He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe. 455
 No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,
 But cryde anon, "cok, cok," and up he sterte,
 As man that was affrayed in his herte.
 For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
 Fro his contrarie, if he may it see, 460
 Though he never erst had seyn it with his yē.

This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
 He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
 Seyde, "Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
 Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?" 465
 Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
 If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.
 I am nat come your counseil for t'espye;
 But trewely, the cause of my cominge
 Was only for to herkne how that ye singe. 470
 For trewely ye have as mery a stevene
 As eny aungel hath, that is in hevене;
 Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
 Than hadde Boëce, or any that can singe.
 My lord your fader (god his soule blesse!) 475
 And eek your moder, of hir gentilesse,
 Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese;
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
 But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
 So mote I brouke¹ wel myn eyen tweye, 480
 Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
 As dide your fader in the morweninge;
 Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
 And for to make his voys the more strong,
 He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe his
 yēn 485

He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
 And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,
 And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
 And eek he was of swich discrecioun.
 That ther nas no man in no regioun 490
 That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
 I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,²
 Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
 For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok
 Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,³ 495
 He made him for to lese his benefyce.
 But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
 Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
 Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
 Now singeth, sire, for seinte Charitee, 500
 Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete?⁴
 This Chauntecleer his wings gan to bete,
 As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
 So was he ravissched with his flaterye.

Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour 505
 Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,⁵
 That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
 Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.

Redeth Ecclesiaste¹ of flaterye;
 Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye. 510
 This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his
 toos,

Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen
 cloos,

And gan to crowe loude for the nones;²
 And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
 And by the gargat³ hente Chauntecleer, 515
 And on his bak toward the wode him beer,
 For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.⁴
 O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
 Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
 Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes! 520
 And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
 O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
 Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
 And in thy service dide al his poweer,
 More for delyt, than world to multiplie, 525
 Why woldestow suffre him on thy day⁵ to
 dye?

O Gaufred,⁶ dere mayster soverayn,
 That, whan thy worthy king Richard was
 slayn

With shot,⁷ compleynedest his deth so sore,
 Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy
 lore, 530

The Friday for to chyde, as diden ye?
 (For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)
 Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude
 pleyne

For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.

Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun 535
 Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun
 Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite
 swerd,

Whan he hadde hent⁸ king Priam by the berd,
 And slayn him (as saith us *Eneydos*),
 As maden alle the hennes in the clos, 540
 Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the
 sighte.

But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighite,
 Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
 Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
 And that the Romayns hadde brend Cart-
 age; 545

She was so ful of torment and of rage,
 That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
 And brende hir-selven with a stedfast herte.
 O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,
 As, whan that *Nero* brende the citee 550
 Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
 For that hir housbondes losten alle hir lyves;

¹ The book of Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha.

² for the nonce.

³ throat.

⁴ pursued.

⁵ Friday is *dies Veneris*.

⁶ Geoffrey of Vinsauf, author of a Latin treatise on the art of poetry, which contains a rhetorical lament for Richard I. Chaucer is laughing at his bombastic style.

⁷ an arrow.

⁸ seized.

¹ have the use of.

² A Latin satirical poem of the twelfth century.

³ foolish.

⁴ imitate.

⁵ flatterer.

Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.

Now wol I torne to my tale agayn: —

This sely¹ widwe, and eek hir doghtres
two, 555

Herden thise hennas crye and maken wo,

And out at dores sterten they anoon,

And syen the fox toward the grove goon,

And bar upon his bak the cok away;

And cryden, "Out! harrow! and weylaway!" 560

Ha, ha, the fox!" and after him they ran,

And eek with staves many another man;

Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,

And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;

Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray
hogges 565

So were they fered for berking of the dogges

And shouting of the men and wimmen eke,

They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;

The dokes cryden as men wolde hem
quelle; 2 570

The gees for fere flowen over the trees;

Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;

So hidous was the noyse, al *benedicite*!

Certes, he Jakke Straw,³ and his meynee,

Ne made never shoutes half so shrille, 575

When that they wolden any Fleming⁴ kille,

As thilke day was maad upon the fox.

Of bras thay broghten bemes,⁵ and of box,

Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and
pouped,

And therewithal thay shryked and they
houped; 580

It semed as that heven sholde falle.

Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!

Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly

The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!

This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak, 585

In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak,

And seyde, "sire, if that I were as ye,

Yet sholde I seyn (as wis⁶ god helpe me),

Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!

A verray pestilence up-on yow falle! 590

Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,

Maugree⁷ your heed, the cok shal heer
abyde;

I wol him ete in feith, and that anon." —

The fox anwerde, "in feith, it shal be don," —

And as he spak that word, al sodeinly 595

This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,⁸

And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.

And when the fox saugh that he was y-gon,

"Allas!" quod he, "O Chauntecleer, alas!

I have to yow," quod he, "y-doon trespas, 600

In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,

When I yow hente, and broghte out of the
yerd;

But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;

Com down, and I shal telle yow what I
mente.

I shal seye sooth to yow, god help me so." 605

"Nay than," quod he, "I shrewe¹ us bothe
two,

And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood and
bones,

If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.

Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,

Do me to singe and winke with myn yē. 610

For he that winketh, whan he sholde see,

Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!"²

"Nay," quod the fox, "but god yeve him
meschaunce,

That is so undiscreet of governaunce,

That jangleth³ whan he sholde holde his
pees." 615

Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,

And negligent, and truste on flaterye.

But ye that holden this tale a folye,

As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,

Taketh the moralitee, good men. 620

For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,

To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.

Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.

Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,

As seith my lord, so make us alle good
men; 625

And bringe us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

Here is ended the Nonne Preestes Tale.

THE PARDONER'S TALE

The *Pardoner's Tale* is a sermon on the text:

"The love of money is the root of all evil."

The dramatic story, full of tragic irony, which serves as *exemplum* for this text, is found in varying forms in many languages. It seems to have started in India, and to have come to Europe *via* Persia and Arabia. A modern version, brought direct from India, is *The King's Ankus* in Kipling's *Second Jungle Book*.

In the Prologue to his tale, the shameless Pardoner, seated in a wayside tavern, cynically describes to his fellow pilgrims his methods of making money by playing on the superstitious credulity of the ignorant. At the end of his sermon-tale, which denounces his own besetting sins of avarice and riotous living, he has the audacity to recommend his spurious relics to the very company which has listened to the *exposé*.

¹ hapless.

² kill.

³ Leader of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

⁴ Many of the London merchants were natives of Flanders.

⁵ trumpets.

⁶ surely.

⁷ in spite of.

⁸ nimbly.

¹ curse.

² prosper.

³ talketh.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE
PARDONER'S TALE*Here folweth the Prologe of the Pardoners
Tale**Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad
Thimotheum, sexto.*

"Lordings," quod he, "in chirches whan I
preche,

I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,¹
And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I can al by rote² that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon, and ever was — 5
'*Radix malorum est Cupiditas.*'³

First I prounce whennes that I come,
And than my bulles shewe I, alle and somme.
Our lige lordes seel on my patente,⁴
That shewe I first, my body to warente, 10
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk;
And after that than telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe; 15
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predicacioun,⁵
And for to stire men to devocioun.
Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones; 20
Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.
Than have I in latoun⁶ a sholder-boon
Which that was of an holy Jewes shepe.
'Good men,' seye I, 'tak of my wordes kepe;'⁷
If that this boon be wasshe in any welle, 25
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
That any worm⁸ hath ete, or worm y-stonge,
Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,
And it is hool anon; and forthermore,
Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore 30
Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
Drinketh a draughte; tak kepe eek what I
telle.

If that the good-man, that the bestes oweth,⁹
Wol every wike,¹⁰ er that the cok him
croweth,

Fastinge, drinken of this welle a draughte, 35
As thilke holy Jewe our eldres taughte,
His bestes and his stoor shal multiplie.
And, sirs, also it heleth jalousye;
For, though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Let maken with this water his potage, 40
And never shal he more his wyf mistriste,
Though he the sooth of hir defeaute wiste;

1 I take pains to speak in a lofty manner.
2 know all by heart. 3 1 Timothy, vi, 10.

4 letter of authority.

5 To give my preaching more color and flavor.

6 latten, a composition of copper and zinc.

7 heed. 8 snake. 9 owneth 10 week.

Al had she taken preestes two or three.

Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.
He that his hond wol putte in this miteyn,
He shal have multiplying of his greyn, 46
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.

Good men and wommen, o thing warne I
yow,

If any wight be in this chirche now, 50
That hath doon sinne horrible, that he
Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be,
Or any womman, be she yong or old,
That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,
Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace 55
To offren to my reliks in this place.
And who-so findeth him out of swich blame,
He wol com up and offren in goddes name,
And I assoille¹ him by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle y-graunted was to 60
me.'

By this gaude² have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner.
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed³ peple is down y-set,
I preche, so as ye han herd bifore, 65
And telle an hundred false japes more.
Than peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,⁴
As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.
Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne,⁵ 70
That it is joye to see my bisnesse.
Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse
Is al my preching, for to make hem free
To yeve her pens, and namely⁶ un-to me.
For my entente is nat but for to winne, 75
And no-thing for correccioun of sinne.
I rekke never, whan that they ben beried,
Though that her soules goon a-blake-beried!⁷
For certes, many a predicacioun
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencion; 80
Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
To been avauced by ipocrisie,
And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.
For, whan I dar non other weyes debate,⁸
Than wol I stinge him with my tonge 85
smerte

In preching, so that he shal nat asterte⁹
To been defamed falsly, if that he
Hath trespassed to my brethren or to me.
For, though I telle noght his propre name,
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same 90
By signes and by othere circumstances.
Thus quyte I folk that doon us displeances;
Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe
Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.

1 absolve. 2 trick. 3 ignorant. 4 nod.
5 brisly. 6 especially. 7 go blackberrying.
8 quarrel. 9 escape.

But shortly myn entente I wol devyse; 95
 I preche of no-thing but for coveityse.
 Therfor my theme is yet, and ever was —
 ‘*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*’
 Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce
 Which that I use, and that is avaryce. 100
 But, though my-self be gilty in that sinne
 Yet can I maken other folk to twinne
 From avaryce, and sore to repente.
 But that is nat my principal entente.
 I preche no-thing but for coveityse; 105
 Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.

Than telle I hem ensamples many oon
 Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:
 For lewed peple loven tales olde;
 Swich thinges can they wel reporte and
 holde. 110

What? trowe ye, the whyles I may preche,
 And winne gold and silver for I teche,
 That I wol live in povert wilfully?
 Nay, nay, I thoughte it never truly!
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry
 londes; 115

I wol not do no labour with myn hondes,
 Ne make baskettes, and live therby,
 Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
 I wol non of the apostles counterfete; 2
 I wol have money, wolles, chese, and whete, 120
 Al were it yeven of the povrest page,
 Or of the povrest widwe in a village,
 Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
 Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,
 And have a joly wenche in every toun. 125
 But herkneth, lordings, in conclusioun;
 Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale.
 Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny
 ale,

By god, I hope I shal yow telle a thing
 That shal, by resoun, been at your lyking. 130
 For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
 A moral tale yet I yow telle can,
 Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.
 How holde your pees, my tale I wol beginne.”

THE PARDONER'S TALE

Here biginneth the Pardoners Tale

In Flaundres whylom was a companye
 Of yonge folk, that haunteden 3 folye,
 As ryot, hasard, stewes, 4 and tavernes,
 Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
 They daunce and pleye at dees bothe day and
 night, 5

And ete also and drinken over hir might,
 Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifice
 With-in that develes temple, in cursed vyse,

By superfluitee abhominable;
 Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable, 10
 That it is grisly for to here hem swere;
 Our blissed lordes body they to-tere; 1
 Hem thoughte Jewes rente him noght
 y-nough;

And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.
 And right anon than comen tombesteres 2 15
 Fetys 3 and smale, and yonge fruyteteres, 4
 Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres, 5
 Whiche been the verray develes officeres
 To kindle and blowe the fyr of lechery,
 That is annexed un-to glotonye; 20
 The holy writ take I to my witenesse,
 That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.
 Lo, how that dronken Loth, unkindly, 6
 Lay by his doghtres two, unwittingly;
 So dronke he was, he niste what he
 wroughte. 25

Herodes, (who-so wel the stories soghte),
 When he of wyn was replet at his feste,
 Right at his owene table he yaf his heste
 To sleen the Baptist John ful giltelees.

Senek seith eek a good word doutlees; 30
 He seith, he can no difference finde
 Bitwix a man that is out of his minde
 And a man which that is dronkelewe, 7
 But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe, 8
 Persevereth longer than doth dronkenesse. 35
 O glotonye, ful of cursednesse,
 O cause first of our confusioun,
 O original of our dampnacioun;
 Til Crist had boght us with his blood agayn!
 Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn, 40
 Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye;
 Corrupt was all this world for glotonye!

Adam our fader, and his wyf also,
 Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
 Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede; 9 45
 For why! that Adam fasted, as I rede,
 He was in Paradys; and whan that he
 Eet of the fruyt defended 10 on the tree,
 Anon he was out-cast to wo and payne.
 O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne! 50
 O, wiste a man how many maladyes
 Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
 He wolde been the more mesurable
 Of his diete, sittinge at his table.
 Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth, 55
 Maketh that, Est and West, and North and
 South,

In erthe, in eir, in water men to-swinke 11
 To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drinke!

1 i.e. they swear by various parts of Christ's body.

2 girl acrobats.

3 well shaped.

4 girls who sell fruit.

5 peddlers of cakes.

6 against nature.

7 drunken.

8 insanity, when it attacks a wicked man.

9 without doubt.

10 forbidden.

11 work hard.

1 separate. 2 imitate. 3 practised. 4 brothels.

Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,
 "Mete un-to wombe, and wombe eek un-to
 mete, 60

Shal god destroyen bothe," as Paulus seith.¹
 Allas! a foul thing is it, by my feith,
 To seye this word, and fouler is the dede,
 Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and
 rede,

That of his throte he maketh his privee, 65
 Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee.

The apostel weping seith ful pitously,
 "Ther walken many of whiche yow told
 have I,

I seye it now weping with pitous voys,
 That they been enemys of Cristes croys, 70
 Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is her
 god."²

O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod,³
 Fulfilde of donge and of corrupcioun!
 At either ende of thee foul is the soun.
 How greet labour and cost is thee to finde!⁴ 75
 Thise cokes, how they stampe, and streyne,
 and grinde,

And turnen substance in-to accident,⁵
 To fulfille al thy likerous talent!⁶
 Out of the harde bones knocke they
 The mary,⁷ for they caste noght a-wey 80
 That may go thurgh the golet softe and
 swote;

Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote
 Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt,
 To make him yet a newer appetyt.
 But certes, he that haunteth swich delyces 85
 Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces.

A lecherous thing is wyn, and dronke-
 nesse

Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse.
 O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
 Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace, 90
 And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the
 soun

As though thou seydest ay "Sampson,
 Sampson";

And yet, god wot, Sampson drank never no
 wyn.

Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;
 Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure;⁸ 95
 For dronkenesse is verray sepulture
 Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.
 In whom that drinke hath dominacioun,
 He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.⁹

Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the
 rede, 100

And namely¹ fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,²
 That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.³
 This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly
 In othere wyne, growing faste by,⁴
 Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,⁵ 105
 That whan a man hath dronken draughtes
 three,

And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
 He is in Spayne, right at the tounne of Lepe,
 Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;⁶
 And thanne wol he seye, "Sampson,
 Sampson." 110

But herkneth, lordings, o word, I yow
 preye,

That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
 Of victories in th'olde testament,
 Thurgh verray god, that is omnipotent, 115
 Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
 Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it lere.

Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
 Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dis-
 honour,

Bleding ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
 A capitayn sholde live in sobrenesse. 120
 And over⁷ al this, avyseth yow right wel
 What was comaunded un-to Lamuel —⁸
 Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I —

Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly
 Of wyn-yeving to hem that han justise. 125
 Na-more of this, for it may wel suffice.

And now that I have spoke of glotonye,
 Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye.⁹
 Hasard is verray moder of lesinges,¹⁰
 And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes, 130
 Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughter, and wast
 also

Of catel¹¹ and of tyme; and forthermo,
 It is reprove¹² and contrarie of honour
 For to ben holde a commune hasardour.

And ever the hyër he is of estaat, 135
 The more he heolden desolaat.
 If that a prince useth hasardrye,
 In alle governaunce and policye
 He is, as by commune opinioun,
 Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun. 140

Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
 Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honour,
 Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce.
 And whan he cam, him happede, par chaunce,
 That alle the grettest that were of that
 lond, 145

Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond.

1 specially. 2 A town in Spain.

3 Cheapside in London.

4 The light wines of France were adulterated with the heavier Spanish wines.

5 fumes. 6 La Rochelle and Bordeaux in France.

7 in addition to. 8 See Proverbs, xxxi, 4.

9 forbid gambling. 10 lies.

11 property. 12 reproach.

1 1 Corinthians, vi, 13.

2 Philippians, iii, 18-19.

3 bag.

4 provide for.

5 In scholastic philosophy, "substance" means essential nature as opposed to the "accidents" of color, taste, etc.

6 luxurious taste.

7 marrow.

8 care about decency.

9 doubt.

For which, as sone as it mighte be,
 He stal him hoom agayn to his contree,
 And seyde, "ther wol I nat lese my name;
 N' I wol nat take on me so greet defame, 150
 Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.
 Sendeth othere wyse embassadours;
 For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye,
 Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.
 For ye that been so glorious in honours 155
 Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours
 As by my wil, ne as by my treete."
 This wyse philosopre thus seyde he.

Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius
 The king of Parthes, as the book seith us, 160
 Sente him a paire of dees¹ of gold in scorn,
 For he hadde used hasard ther-biforen;
 For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
 At no value or reputacioun.

Lordes may finden other maner pley 165
 Honeste y-nough to dryve the day away.

Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
 A word or two, as olde bokes trete.
 Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
 And false swering is yet more reprevable. 170
 The heighe god forbad swering at al,
 Witnesse on Mathew;² but in special
 Of swering seith the holy Jeremye,³
 "Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and nat
 lye,

And swere in dome, and eek in rightwis-
 nesse;" 175

But ydel swering is a cursednesse.
 Bihold and see, that in the firste table
 Of heighe goddes hestes honorable,
 How that the seconde⁴ heste of him is this —
 "Tak nat my name in ydel or amis." 180

Lo, rather⁵ he forbedeth swich swering
 Than homicyde or many a cursed thing;
 I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondeth;
 This knowen, that his hestes understondeth,
 How that the second heste of god is that. 185
 And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat,⁶
 That vengeance shal nat parten from his
 hous,

That of his othes is to outrageous.
 "By goddes precious herte, and by his nayles,
 And by the blode of Crist, that it is in
 Hayles," 190
 Seven is my chaunce, and thyn is cink
 treye;⁸

By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,

This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte
 go" —

This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones¹
 two,

Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde. 195
 Now, for the love of Crist that for us dyde,
 Leveth your othes, bothe grete and smale;
 But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale.

Thise ryotours three, of whiche I telle,
 Longe erst er pryme² rong of any belle, 200
 Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke;
 And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke
 Biforen a cors, was caried to his grave;
 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,³
 "Go bet,"⁴ quod he, "and axe redily, 205
 What cors is this that passeth heer forby;
 And look that thou reporte his name wel."
 "Sir," quod this boy, "it nedeth never-
 a-del.

It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres;
 He was, pardee, an old felawe of youre; 210
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,⁵
 For-dronke,⁶ as he sat on his bench upright;
 Ther cam a privee thief, men clepeth Deeth,
 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
 And with his spere he smoot his herte
 a-two, 215

And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo.
 He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:
 And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
 Me thinketh that it were necessarie
 For to be war of swich an adversarie: 220
 Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
 Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-more."
 "By seinte Marie," seyde this taverer,
 "The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this
 yeer,

Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village, 225
 Both man and womman, child and hyne,⁷ and
 page.

I trowe his habitacioun be there;
 To been avysed greet wisdom it were,
 Er that he hide a man a dishonour."
 "Ye, goddes armes," quod this ryotour, 230
 "Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
 I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,
 I make avow to goddes digne bones!
 Herkneith, felawes, we three been al ones;
 Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other, 235
 And ech of us bicomen othere brother,
 And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth;
 He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth,
 By goddes dignitee, er it be night."

Togidres han thise three her trouthes
 plight, 240

1 cursed dice. 2 nine A.M. 3 servant.
 4 quickly. 5 last night. 6 dead drunk. 7 servant.

1 dice. 2 St. Matthew, v. 34. 3 Jeremiah, iv. 2.
 4 In the Authorized Version it is the third command-
 ment. The Vulgate has a different arrangement.

5 i.e. in an earlier commandment.

6 And furthermore I say flatly.

7 An abbey in Gloucestershire, at which was shown as
 a relic a phial containing some of the sacred blood.

8 five and three. The "chance" is a term in the game
 of "hazard," a more complicated form of the modern
 "craps."

To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
 As though he were his owene y-boren brother.
 And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage,
 And forth they goon towards that village,
 Of which the taverner had spoke biforn, ²⁴⁵
 And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn,
 And Cristes blessed body they to-rente ¹ —
 "Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him
 hente."

When they han goon nat fully half a myle,
 Right as they wolde han troden over a
 style, ²⁵⁰

An old man and a povre with hem mette.
 This olde man ful mekely hem grette, ²
 And seyde thus, "now, lordes, god yow see!" ³

The proudest of thise ryoutoures three
 Answerde agayn, "what? carl, ⁴ with sory
 grace, ²⁵⁵

Why artow al forwrapped ⁵ save thy face?
 Why livestow so longe in so greet age?"

This olde man gan loken in his visage,
 And seyde thus, "for I ne can nat finde
 A man, though that I walked in-to Inde, ²⁶⁰
 Neither in citee nor in no village,
 That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age;
 And therefore moot I han myn age stille,
 As longe time as it is goddes wille.

Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf; ²⁶⁵
 Thus walke I, lyk a resteles caityf, ⁶
 And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
 I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
 And seye, 'leve moder, leet me in!
 Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and
 skin! ²⁷⁰

Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
 Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,
 That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
 Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!' ⁷
 But yet to me she wol nat do that grace, ²⁷⁵
 For which ful pale and welked ⁸ is my face.

But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye
 To speken to an old man vileinye,
 But he trespasse in worde, or elles in dede.
 In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede, ²⁸⁰
 'Agayns ⁹ an old man, hoor upon his heed,
 Ye sholde aryse;' ¹⁰ wherfor I yeve yow reed,
 Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now,
 Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow
 In age, if that ye so longe abyde; ²⁸⁵
 And god be with yow, wher ye go ¹¹ or ryde.
 I moot go thider as I have to go."

"Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shalt nat
 so,"

Seyde this other hasardour anon;
 "Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint
 John! ²⁹⁰

Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deeth,
 That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth.
 Have heer my trouthe, as thou are his aspye, ¹
 Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abyde, ²
 By god, and by the holy sacrament! ²⁹⁵
 For soothly thou art oon of his assent,
 To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!"

"Now, sirs," quod he, "if that yow be so
 leef

To finde Deeth, turne up this coked wey,
 For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey, ³⁰⁰
 Under a tree, and ther he wol abyde;
 Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing hyde.
 See ye that ook? right ther ye shul him
 finde.

God save yow, that boghte agayn mankinde,
 And yow amende!" — thus seyde this olde
 man. ³⁰⁵

And everich of thise ryoutoures ran,
 Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
 Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde
 Wel ny an eighte busshels, as hem thoughte.
 No lenger thanne after Deeth they
 soughte, ³¹⁰

But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
 For that the florins been so faire and brighte,
 That doun they sette hem by this precious
 hord.

The worste of hem he spake the firste word.
 "Brethren," quod he, "tak kepe what I
 seye; ³¹⁵

My wit is greet, though that I bourde ³ and
 pleye.

This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
 In mirthe and jolitee our lyf to liven,
 And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.
 Ey! goddes precious dignitee! who wende ³²⁰
 To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
 But mighte this gold be caried fro this place
 Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youres —
 For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures —
 Than were we in heigh felicitee. ³²⁵

But trewely, by daye it may nat be;
 Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge.
 And for our owene tresor doon us honge.⁴
 This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
 As wysly and as slyly as it mighte. ³³⁰

Wherfore I rede that cut among us alle
 Be drawe, and lat see wher the cut wol falle;
 And he that hath the cut with herte blythe
 Shal renne to the toune, and that ful swythe,⁵
 And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively. ³³⁵
 And two of us shul kepen subtilly

1 tore to pieces.

2 greeted.

3 protect.

4 churl.

5 wrapped up.

6 captive.

7 I would exchange my chest full of money for a hair-

cloth shroud.

9 in presence of.

11 walk.

8 withered.

10 Leviticus, xix, 32.

1 spy.

2 pay for.

3 jest.

4 have us hanged.

5 quickly.

This tresor wel; and, if he wol nat tarie,
 When it is night, we wol this tresor carie
 By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best."
 That oon of hem the cut broughte in his
 fest, 340

And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle;
 And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;
 And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
 And al-so sone as that he was gon,
 That oon of hem spak thus un-to that
 other, 345

"Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne
 brother,

Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
 Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon;
 And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
 That shal departed been among us three. 350
 But natheles, if I can shape it so
 That it departed were among us two,
 Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?"

That other answerde, "I noot how that
 may be;

He woot how that the gold is with us tweye,
 What shal we doon, what shal we to him
 seye?" 356

"Shal it be conseil?"¹ seyde the firste
 shrewe,²

"And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,
 What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute."

"I graunte," quod that other, "out of
 doute, 360

That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat bi-
 wreye."

"Now," quod the firste, "thou woost wel
 we be tweye,

And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
 Look whan that he is set, and right anon
 Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye;
 And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes tweye
 Why! that thou strogelest with him as in
 game, 367

And with thy dagger look thou do the same;
 And than shal al this gold departed be,
 My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee; 370
 Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
 And pleye at dees right at our owene wille."
 And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
 To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.

This yongest, which that wente un-to the
 toun, 375

Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
 The beautee of thise florins newe and brighte.
 "O lord!" quod he, "if so were that I mighte
 Have al this tresor to my-self allone,
 Ther is no man that liveth under the trone 380
 Of god, that sholde live so mery as I!"
 And atte laste the feend, our enemy,

¹ a secret.

² rogue.

Putte in his thought that he shold poyson
 beye,

With which he mighte sleen his felawes
 tweye;

For-why the feend fond him in swich lyvinge,
 That he had leve him to sorwe bringe, 386

For this was outrely his fulle entente
 To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente.

And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
 Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie, 390

And preyed him, that he him wolde selle
 Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes quelle,³

And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,⁴
 That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,

And fayne he wolde wreke him, if he
 mighte, 395

On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte.

The pothecarie answerde, "and thou shalt
 have

A thing that, al-so god my soule save,
 In al this world there nis no creature,

That ete or dronke hath of this confiture 400
 Noght but the mountance⁵ of a corn of
 whete,

That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete;
 Ye, sterve⁴ he shal, and that in lasse whyle

Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a myle;
 This poyson is so strong and violent." 405

This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent
 This poyson in a box, and sith he ran

In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man,
 And borwed of him large botels three;

And in the two his poyson poured he; 410
 The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.

For al the night he shoop him for to swinke.⁵
 In carynge of the gold out of that place.

And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
 Had filled with wyn his grete botels three, 415

To his felawes agayn repaireth he.
 What nedeth it to sermone of it more?

For right as they had cast his deeth bfore,
 Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.

And whan that this was doon, thus spak
 that oon, 420

"Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us
 merie,

And afterward we wol his body berie."
 And with that word it happed him, par

cas,
 To take the botel ther the poyson was,

And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also, 425
 For which anon they storven⁶ bothe two.

But, certes, I suppose that Avicen⁷
 Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen,

¹ kill. ² yard. ³ amount. ⁴ die.
⁵ he intended to labor. ⁶ died.

⁷ Avicenna, famous Arabian physician of about 1100
 A.D., author of a medical treatise called the "Canon," di-
 vided into chapters called "fens."

Mo wonder ¹ signes of empoisoning
 Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir
 ending. 430
 Thus ended been thise homicydes two,
 And eek the false empoysoner also.

O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse!
 O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!
 O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye! 435
 Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye
 And othes grete, of usage and of pryde!
 Allas! mankinde, how may it bityde,
 That to thy creatour which that thee
 wroghte,
 And with his precious herte-blood thee
 boghte, 440
 Thou art so fals and so unkinde, allas!

Now, goode men, god foryeve yow your
 trespas,
 And ware yow fro ² the sinne of avaryce.
 Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,³
 So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges,⁴ 445
 Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes.
 Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!
 Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your wolle!
 Your name I entre heer in my rolle anon;
 In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon; 450
 I yow assoile,⁵ by myn heigh power,
 Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as
 cleer

As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I preche.
 And Jesu Crist, that is our soules leche,
 So graunte yow his pardon to receyve; 455
 For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.

But sirs,⁶ o word forgat I in my tale,
 I have relikes and pardon in my male,⁷
 As faire as any man in Engelond,
 Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond. 460
 If any of yow wol, of devocioun,
 Offren, and han myn absolucioun,
 Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer adoun,
 And mekely receyveth my pardoun:
 Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende, 465
 Al newe and fresh, at every tounes ende,
 So that ye offren alwey newe and newe
 Nobles and pens, which that be gode and
 trewe.

It is an honour to everich that is heer,
 That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer 470
 T'assoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
 For adventures which that may bityde.
 Peraventure ther may falle oon or two
 Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.
 Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle 475
 That I am in your felawshipe y-falle,

¹ wonderful.

² beware of.

³ cure.

⁴ silver coins.

⁵ absolve.

⁶ The Pardoner now addresses his fellow-pilgrims.

⁷ bag.

That may assoille yow, bothe more and lasse,
 Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe.
 I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,
 For he is most enveloped in sinne. 480
 Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,
 And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,
 Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy purs."

"Nay, nay," quod he, "than have I
 Cristes curs!
 Lat be," quod he, "it shall nat be, so
 thee'ch!"¹ 485
 Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old
 breech,²
 And swere it were a relik of a seint."

This pardoner answerde nat a word;
 So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he
 seye.

"Now," quod our host, "I wol no lenger
 pleye 490

With thee, ne with noon other angry man."
 But right anon the worthy Knight bigan,
 Whan that he saugh that all the peple lough,
 "Na-more of this, for it is right y-nough;
 Sir Pardoner, be glad and mery of chere; 495
 And ye, sir host, that been to me so dere,
 I prey yow that ye kisse the Pardoner.
 And Pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,
 And, as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye."
 Anon they kiste, and riden forth hir weye. 500

Here is ended the Pardoners Tale

THE PRIORESS'S TALE

The pathetic story of the little school-boy murdered by the Jews is a tale of the type, popular in the Middle Ages, known as the *miracle*. These tales were often, as in this case, told to exemplify the loving care of the Blessed Virgin for those who show her love and honor. While preserving its religious purport, Chaucer has done full justice to the human values of the story. A similar story is found in the ballad of *Hugh of Lincoln* included in this volume.

The Prologe of the Prioresses Tale *Domine, dominus noster.*³

O Lord our lord, thy name how merveillous
 Is in this large worlde y-sprad — quod she: —
 For noght only thy laude precious
 Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
 But by the mouth of children thy bountee 5
 Parfourned is, for on the brest soukinge
 Som tyme shewen they thyn herynge.⁴

¹ so may I prosper.

² breeches.

³ The first words of Psalm 8. The first stanza paraphrases verses 1-2 of this Psalm.

⁴ praise.

Wherefor in laude, as I best can or may,
Of thee, and of the whyte lily flour
Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway,¹⁰
To telle a storie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encresen hir honour;
For she hir-self is honour, and the rote
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules
bote.¹—

O moder mayde! o mayde moder free! 15
O bush unbrent,² brenninge in Moyses
sighte,
That ravishedest doun³ fro the deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in
th'alighte,⁴
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,⁵
Conceived was the fadres sapience, 20
Help me to telle it in thy reverence!

Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu, and thy grete humiltee
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
For som-tyme, lady, er men praye to thee, 25
Thou goost biforn of thy benignitee,
And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,
To gyden us un-to thy sone so dere.⁶

My conning is so wayk, o blisful quene,
For to declare thy grete worthinesse, 30
That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse,
That can unnethes⁷ any word expresse,
Right so fare I, and therefore I yow preye,
Gydeyth my song that I shal of yow seye. 35

Explicit

Here biginneth the Prioresses Tale

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
Amonges Cristen folk, a Jewerye,⁸
Sustened by a lord of that contree
For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
Hateful to Crist and to his companye; 40
And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or
wende,
For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
Children an heep, y-comen of Cristen
blood, 45
That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
Swich maner doctrine as men used there,

This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hir childhede.

Among these children was a widwes sone, 50
A litel clergeon,¹ seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,²
And eek also, wher-as he saugh th'image
Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye. 56

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone y-taught
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
For sely³ child wol alday sone lere;⁴ 60
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Saint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist did reverence.⁵

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer, 65
He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,
As children lerned hir antiphoner;⁶
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and
ner,⁷
And herked ay the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers coude al by rote. 70

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he preye
T'expounden him this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage; 75
This preyde he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes⁸ bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Answerde him thus: "this song, I have herd
seye,
Was maked of our blisful lady free,⁹ 80
Hir to salue,¹⁰ and eek hir for to preye
To becn our help and socour whan we
deye.

I can no more expounde in this matere;
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere."

"And is this song maked in reverence 85
Of Cristes moder?" seyde this innocent;
"Now certes, I wol do my diligence.
To conne it al, er Cristemasse is went;¹¹
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,¹²

1 schoolboy. 2 custom. 3 innocent. 4 learn.

5 St. Nicholas, while still an infant, refused to suck on
days of abstinence. He is patron-saint of children.

6 book of anthems. 7 nearer and nearer.

8 knees. 9 generous. 10 greet.

11 The anthem, *Alma redemptoris mater*, was sung for a
month before and after Christmas. The Latin means,
"fostering mother of the Redeemer."

12 scolded.

1 help. 2 unburned. 3 didst draw down.

4 the Holy Ghost that alighted in thee.

5 illuminated.

6 This stanza paraphrases Dante, *Paradiso*, XXXIII,

13-21.

7 hardly.

8 Jewish quarter.

And shal be beten thryës in an houre, 90
I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure."

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
And than he song it well and boldly
Fro word to word, acording with the note; 95
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes moder set was his entente.

As I have seyð, thurgh-out the Jewerye
This litel child, as he cam to and fro, 100
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
O Alma redemptoris ever-mo.
The swetnes hath his herte perced so
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
He can nat stinte of singing by the weye. 105

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal,¹ and seide, "O Hebraik peple, allas!
Is this to yow a thing that is honest,²
That swich a boy shal walken as him lest³ 110
In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,
Which is agayn your lawes reverence?"

Fro thennes forth the Jewes han conspyred
This innocent out of this world to chace;
An homicyde ther-to han they hyred, 115
That in an aley hadde a privee place;
And as the child gan for-by for to pace,
This cursed Jew him hente and heeld him
faste,
And kitte his throte, and in a pit him caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe⁴ they him
threwe 120
Wher-as these Jewes purgen hir entraille.
O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,
What may your yvel entente yow availle?
Mordre wol out, certain, it wol nat faille,
And namely⁵ ther th'onour of god shal
sprede, 125
The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

"O martir, souted⁶ to virginitee,
Now maystow singen, folwing ever in oon
The whyte lamb celestial," quod she,
"Of which the grete evangelist, seint
John, 130
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they
that goon
Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al newe,
That never, fleshly, wommen they ne
knewe." 7

1 swelled. 2 decent.
4 privy. 5 specially.
7 Revelation, xiv, 3-4.

3 as he pleases.
6 firmly attached.

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
After hir litel child, but he cam noght; 135
For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
With face pale of drede and bisy thoght,
She hath at scole and elles-wher him soght,
Til finally she gan so fer espye
That he last seyn was in the Jewerye. 140

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,
To every place wher she hath supposed
By lyklihedde hir litel child to finde; 144
And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte,
Among the cursed Jewes she him soghte.

She frayneth¹ and she preyeth pitously
To every Jew that dwelte in thilke place,
To telle hir, if hir child wente oght for-by. 150
They seyde, "nay"; but Jesu, of his grace,
Yaf in hir thought, inwith² a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde,
Wher he was casten in a pit byside.

O grete god, that parfournest thy laude 155
By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy might!
This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
Ther he with throte y-corven³ lay upright, 4
He "*Alma redemptoris*" gan to singe 160
So loudre, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete
wente,

In coomen, for to wondre up-on this thing,
And hastily they for the provost sente;
He cam anon with-outen taryng, 165
And herieth⁵ Crist that is of henvn king,
And eek his moder, honour of mankind,
And after that, the Jewes leet he binde.

This child with pitous lamentacioun
Up-taken was, singing his song alway; 170
And with honour of greet processcioun
They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.
His moder swowning by the bere⁶ lay;
Unnethe⁷ might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere. 175

With torment and with shamful deth echon
This provost dooth thise Jewes for to sterve⁸
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.⁹
Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve. 180
Therfor with wilde hors¹⁰ he dide hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

1 inquires. 2 within. 3 cut.
4 face upwards. 5 praiseth. 6 bier.
7 hardly. 8 die. 9 countenance. 10 horses.

Up-on his bere ay lyth this innocent
 Biforn the chief auter,¹ whyl masse laste, 184
 And after that, the abbot with his covent
 Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
 And whan they holy water on him caste,
 Yet spak this child, whan spreynd² was holy
 water,
 And song — "*O Alma redemptoris mater!*"

This abbot, which that was an holy man 190
 As monkes been, or elles oghten be,
 This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
 And seyde, "o dere child, I halse³ thee,
 In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
 Tel me what is thy cause for to singe, 195
 Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge?"

"My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,"
 Seyde this child, "and, as by wey of kinde,⁴
 I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,
 But Jesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde, 200
 Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde;
 And, for the worship of his moder dere,
 Yet may I singe '*O Alma*' loude and clere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
 I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;⁵ 205
 And whan that I my lyf sholde forelete,⁶
 To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
 This antem verrailly in my deyenge,
 As ye han herd, and, whan that I had songe,
 Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on my
 tonge. 210

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn
 In honour of that blisful mayden free,
 Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn;
 And afterward thus seyde she to me,
 'My litel child, now wol I fecche thee 215
 Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take;
 Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake.'"

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I,
 His tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey the
 greyn,
 And he yaf up the goost ful softly. 220
 And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
 His salte teres trikked down as reyn,
 And gruf⁷ he fil al plat up-on the grounde,
 And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement 225
 Weping, and herien⁸ Cristes moder dere,
 And after that they ryse, and forth ben
 went,

1 altar. 2 sprinkled. 3 beseech.

4 nature.

5 as well as I knew how.

6 on his face.

6 give up.

8 praise.

And toke away this martir fro his bere,
 And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
 Enclosen they his litel body swete; 230
 Ther he is now, god leve us for to mete.¹

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also
 With cursed Jewes, as it is notable,
 For it nis but a litel whyle ago;
 Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable, 235
 That, of his mercy, god so merciable
 On us his grete mercy multiplye,
 For reverence of his moder Marye. Amen.

Here is ended the Prioresses Tale

THE FRIAR'S TALE

Friar and Summoner are traditional enemies. The Summoner, an officer of the ecclesiastical courts, is a hanger-on of the "secular" clergy — the parish priest and his bishop. The Friars, belonging to an order outside the bishop's jurisdiction, were continually meddling through their own spiritual ministrations in the pastoral work of the parish priest, an interference which the priest naturally resented. On the Canterbury pilgrimage Chaucer's Summoner and Friar get to quarrelling, and each tells a story at the expense of the other. *The Friar's Tale* applies to a Summoner a popular anecdote previously told at the expense of a bailiff or a lawyer; but the bare anecdote is developed into a tale of vivid realization and delicious comic irony.

THE FRIAR'S PROLOGUE

The Prologe of the Freres Tale

This worthy limitour,² this noble Frere,
 He made alwey a maner louring chere
 Upon the Somnour, but for honestee
 No vileyns word as yet to him spak he.
 But atte laste he seyde un-to the Wyf, 5
 "Dame," quod he, "god yeve yow right
 good lyf!

Ye han heer touched, al-so mote I thee,³
 In scole-matere greet difficultee;
 Ye han seyde muchel thing right wel, I seye;
 But dame, here as we ryden by the weye, 10
 Us nedeth nat to speken but of game,
 And lete auctoritees, on goddes name,
 To preching and to scole eek of clergye.
 But if it lyke to this companye,
 I wol yow of a somnour telle a game. 15
 Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the name,
 That of a somnour may no good be sayd;
 I praye that noon of you be yvel apayd.⁴

1 i.e. in heaven.

2 A friar licensed to beg for alms within a certain limited area.

3 prosper.

4 displeased.

A somnour is a renner up and doun
With mandements for fornicacioun, 20
And is y-bet at every tounes ende."

Our host tho spak, "a! sire, ye sholde be hende¹

And curteys, as a man of your estaat;
In companye we wol have no debaat.²
Telleth your tale, and lat the Somnour be." 25

"Nay," quod the Somnour, "lat him seye to me

What so him list; whan it comth to my lot,
By god, I shal him quyten every grot.
I shal him tellen which a greet honour

It is to be a flateringe limitour; 30
And his offyce I shal him telle, y-wis."

Our host answerde, "pees, na-more of this."

And after this he seyde un-to the Frere,
"Tel forth your tale, leve maister deere."

Here endeth the Prologe of the Frere

THE FRIAR'S TALE

Here beginneth the Freres Tale

Whilom ther was dwellinge in my contree
An erchedeken, a man of heigh degree,
That boldely dide execucioun

In punisshinge of fornicacioun, 5
Of wicchecraft, and eek of bauderie,

Of diffamacioun, and avoutrye,³
Of chirche-reves,⁴ and of testaments,

Of contractes, and of lakke of sacraments,
And eek of many another maner cryme

Which nedeth nat herchen at this tyme; 10
Of usure, and of symonye also.

But certes, lechours dide he grettest wo;
They sholde singen, if that they were hent;⁵

And smale tytheres weren foule y-shent.
If any persone wolde up-on hem pleyne, 15

Ther mighte asterte him⁶ no pecunial payne.
For smale tythes and for smal offringe

He made the peple pitously to singe.
For er the bisshop caughte hem with his

hook,
They weren in the erchedeknes book. 20

Thanne hadde he, thurgh his juridiccoun,
Power to doon on hem correccioun.

He hadde a Somnour redy to his hond,
A slyer boy was noon in Engelond;

For subtilly he hadde his espaille, 25
That taughte him, wher that him mighte

availle.
He coude spare of lechours oon or two,
To techen him to foure and twenty mo.

1 polite. 2 quarrel. 3 adultery.
4 church wardens. 5 caught.
6 he could avoid.

For thogh this Somnour wood¹ were as an hare,

To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare; 30
For we been out of his correccioun;²

They han of us no juridiccoun,
Ne never shullen, terme of alle hir lyves,

"Peter! so been the wommen of the styves,"³

Quod the Somnour, "y-put out of my cure!" 35
"Pees, with mischance and with mis-

aventure,"
Thus seyde our host, "and lat him telle his

tale.
Now telleth forth, thogh that the Somnour

gale,⁴
Ne spareth nat, myn owene maister dere."

This false theef, this Somnour, quod the
Frere, 40

Hadde alwey baudes redy to his hond,
As any hauk to lure in Engelond,

That tolde him al the secree that they knewe;
For hir acqueyntance was nat come of-newe.

They weren hise approwours⁵ prively; 45
He took him-self a greet profit therby;

His maister knew nat alwey what he wan.
With-outen mandement, a lewed⁶ man

He coude somme, on peyne of Cristes curs,
And they were gladde for to fille his purs, 50

And make him grete festes atte nale.⁷
And right as Judas hadde purses smale,

And was a theef, right swich a theef was he;
His maister hadde but half his duëtee.⁸

He was, if I shal yeven him his laude, 55
A theef, and eek a Somnour, and a baude.

He hadde eek wenches at his retenue,
That, whether that sir Robert or sir Huwe,

Or Jakke, or Rauf, or who-so that it were,
That lay by hem, they tolde it in his ere; 60

Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent.
And he wolde fecche a feyned mandement,

And somme hem to the chapitre⁹ bothe two,
And pile¹⁰ the man, and lete the wenche go.

Thanne wolde he seye, "frend, I shal for thy
sake 65

Do stryken hir out of our lettres blake;
Thee thar¹¹ na-more as in this cas travaille;

I am thy freend, ther I thee may availle."
Certeyn he knew of bryberyes mo

Than possible is to telle in yeres two. 70
For in this world nis dogge for the bowe,

That can an hurt deer from an hool y-knowe,
Bet than this Somnour knew a sly lechour,

Or an avouter, or a paramour.

1 mad.
2 The Friar, as a member of a mendicant order, was not under the jurisdiction of the diocese in which he lived.
3 brothels. 4 exclaim. 5 informers.
6 ignorant. 7 at the ale house. 8 sum due to him.
9 chapter house. 10 plunder. 11 thou needest.

And, for that was the fruit of al his rente, 75
Therefore on it he sette al his entente.

And so bifel, that ones on a day
This Somnour, ever waiting on his pray,
Rood for to somne a widwe, an old ribybe,¹
Feyninge a cause, for he wolde brybe. 80
And happed that he saugh bifore him ryde
A gay yeman,² under a forest-syde.

A bowe he bar, and arwes brighte and kene;
He hadde up-on a courtepy³ of grene;
An hat up-on his heed with frenches blake. 85
"Sir," quod this Somnour, "hay! and
wel a-take!"

"Wel-come," quod he, "and every good fel-
lawe!

Wher rydestow under this grene shawe?"⁴
Seyde this yeman, "wiltow fer to day?"

This Somnour him answerde, and seyde,
"nay; 90

Heer faste by," quod he, "is myn entente
To ryden, for to reysen up a rente
That longeth to my lordes duettee."

"Artow thanne a bailly?" "Ye!" quod he.
He dorste nat, for verray filthe and shame, 95
Seye that he was a somnour, for the name.

"*Depardieux*," quod this yeman, "dere
brother,

Thou art a bailly, and I am another.
I am unknowen as in this contree;
Of thyn aqueyntance I wolde praye thee, 100
And eek of brotherhede, if that yow leste.

I have gold and silver in my cheste;
If that thee happe to comen in our shyre,
Al shal be thyn, right as thou wolt desyre."

"Grantmercy,"⁵ quod this Somnour, "by
my feith!" 105

Everich in othes hand his trouthe leith,
For to be sworne bretheren til they deye.
In daliance they ryden forth hir weye.

This Somnour, which that was as ful of
jangles,⁶

As ful of venim been thise wariangles,⁷ 110
And ever enquering up-on every thing,

"Brother," quod he, "where is now your
dwelling,

Another day if that I sholde yow seche?"

This yeman him answerde in softe speche,
"Brother," quod he, "fer in the north⁸
contree, 115

Wher, as I hope, som-tyme I shal thee see.
Er we departe, I shal thee so wel wisse.

That of myn hous ne shaltow never misse."

"Now, brother," quod this Somnour, "I
yow preye,

Teche me, whyl that we ryden by the weye,

1 hag. 2 yeoman. 3 short jacket. 4 forest.
5 many thanks. 6 idle talk. 7 butcher-birds.

8 The north, as the region of darkness, was believed to
be the home of devils.

Sin that ye been a baillif as am I, 121
Som subtiltee, and tel me feithfully

In myn offyce how I may most winne;
And spareth nat for conscience ne sinne,
But as my brother tel me, how do ye?" 125

"Now, by my trouthe, brother dere,"
seyde he,

"As I shal tellen thee a feithful tale,
My wages been ful streite¹ and ful smale.

My lord is hard to me and daungerous,²
And myn offyce is ful laborous; 130

And therfore by extorcions I live.
For sothe, I take al that men wol me yive;

Algate, by sleighte or by violence,
Fro yeer to yeer I winne al my dispence.

I can no bettre telle feithfully." 135
"Now, certes," quod this Somnour, "so

fare I;
I spare nat to taken, god it woot,

But-if it be to hevy or to hoot.
What I may gete in conseil prively,

No maner conscience of that have I; 140
Nere myn extorcioun, I mighte nat liven,

Ne of swiche japes³ wol I nat be shriven.
Stomak ne conscience ne knowe I noon;

I shrewe thise shrifte-fadres⁴ everichoon.
Wel be we met, by god and by seint

Jame! 145
But, leve brother, tel me than thy name,"

Quod this Somnour; and in this mene whyle,
This yeman gan a litel for to smyle.

"Brother," quod he, "wiltow that I thee
telle?

I am a feend, my dwelling is in helle. 150
And here I ryde about my purchasing,

To wite wher men wolde yewe me any
thing.

My purchas is th'effect of al my rente.⁵
Loke how thou rydest for the same entente,

To winne good, thou rekkest never how; 155
Right so fare I, for ryde wolde I now

Un-to the worldes ende for a preye."

"A," quod this Somnour, "*ben'cite*, what
sey ye?

I wende ye were a yeman trewely.
Ye han a mannes shap as wel as I; 160

Han ye figure than determinat
In helle, ther ye been in your estat?"

"Nay, certainly," quod he, "ther have we
noon;

But whan us lyketh, we can take us oon,
Or elles make yow seme we ben shape 165

Som-tyme lyk a man, or lyk an ape;
Or lyk an angel can I ryde or go.

It is no wonder thing thogh it be so;

1 restricted. 2 overbearing. 3 jokes.
4 I curse these father-confessors.

5 what I get is the sum-total of my income.

A lousy jogelour can deceyve thee,
And pardee, yet can¹ I more craft than
he." 170

"Why," quod the Somnour, "ryde ye
thanne or goon

In sondry shap, and nat alwey in oon?"

"For we," quod he, "wol us swich formes
make

As most able is our preyes for to take." 174

"What maketh yow to han al this labour?"

"Ful many a cause, leve sir Somnour,"

Seyde this feend, "but alle thing hath tyme.

The day is short, and it is passed pryme,²

And yet ne wan I no-thing in this day.

I wol entende to winnen, if I may, 180

And nat entende our wittes to declare.

For, brother myn, thy wit is al to bare

To understonde, al-thogh I tolde hem thee.

But, for thou axest why labouren we;

For, som-tyme, we ben goddes instru-

ments, 185

And menes to don his comandements,

Whan that him list, up-on his creatures,

In divers art and in divers figures.

With-outen him we have no might, certayn,

If that him list to stonden ther-agayn. 190

And som-tyme, at our prayere, han we leve

Only the body and nat the soule greve;

Witnesse on Job, whom that we diden wo.

And som-tyme han we might of bothe two,

This is to seyn, of soule and body eke. 195

And somtyme be we suffred for to seke

Up-on a man, and doon his soule unreste,

And nat his body, and al is for the beste.

Whan he withstandeth our temptacioun,

It is a cause of his savacioun; 200

Al-be-it that it was nat our entente

He sholde be sauf, but that we wolde him

hente.³

And som-tyme be we servant un-to man,

As to the erchebisshop Seint Dunstan

And to the apostles servant eek was I." 205

"Yet tel me," quod the Somnour, "feith-

fully,

Make ye yow newe bodies thus alway

Of elements?" the feend answerde, "nay;

Som-tyme we feyne, and som-tyme we aryse

With dede bodies in ful sondry wyse, 210

And speke as renably⁴ and faire and wel

As to the Phitonissa⁵ dide Samuel.

And yet wol som men seye it was nat he;

I do no fors of⁶ your divinitee.

But o thing warne I thee, I wol nat jape, 215

Thou wolst algates wite how we ben shape;

Thou shalt her-afterward, my brother dere,

Com ther thee nedeth nat of me to lere.

For thou shalt by thyn owene experience
Conne in a chayer rede¹ of this sentence 220

Bet than Virgyle, whyl he was on lyve,

Or Dant also; now lat us ryde blyve.

For I wol holde companye with thee

Til it be so, that thou forsake me."

"Nay," quod this Somnour, "that shal

nat bityde; 225

I am a yeman, knowen is ful wyde;

My trouthe wol I holde as in this cas.

For though thou were the devel Sathanas,

My trouthe wol I holde to my brother,

As I am sworn, and ech of us til other 230

For to be trewe brother in this cas;

And bothe we goon abouten our purchas.

Tak thou thy part, what that men wol thee

yive,

And I shall myn; thus may we bothe live.

And if that any of us have more than

other, 235

Lat him be trewe, and parte it with his

brother."

"I graunte," quod the devel, "by my fey."

And with that word they ryden forth hir

wey.

And right at the entring of the tounes ende,

To which this Somnour shoop him² for to

wende, 240

They saugh a cart, that charged was with

hey,

Which that a carter droof forth in his wey.

Deep was the wey, for which the carte stood.

The carter smoot, and cryde, as he were wood,

"Hayt, Brok! hayt, Scot! what spare ye for

the stones? 245

The feend," quod he, "yow fecche body and

bones,

As ferforthly as ever were ye foled!

So muche wo as I have with yow tholed!³

The devel have al, bothe hors and cart and

hey!"

This Somnour seyde, "heer shal we have a

pley;" 250

And neer the feend he drough, as noght ne

were,

Ful privily, and rouned⁴ in his ere:

"Herkne, my brother, herkne, by thy feith;

Herestow nat how that the carter seith?

Hent⁵ it anon, for he hath yeve it thee, 255

Bothe hey and cart, and eek hise caples⁶

three."

"Nay," quod the devel, "god wot, never

a deel;

It is nat his entente, trust me weel.

Axe him thy-self, if thou nat trowest me,

Or elles stint⁷ a while, and thou shalt see." 260

1 know. 2 nine A.M. 3 catch. 4 reasonably.
5 The Witch of Endor. 6 I take no stock in.

1 lecture. 2 made his plans. 3 suffered.
4 whispered. 5 take. 6 cart-horses. 7 stop.

This carter thakketh¹ his hors upon the
croupe,
And they bigonne drawn and to-stoupe,²
"Heyt, now!" quod he, "ther Jesu Crist yow
blesse,
And al his handwerk, bothe more and lesse!
That was wel twight,³ myn owene lyard⁴
boy!" 265

I pray god save thee and sēynt Loy!
Now is my cart out of the slow, pardee!"
"Lo! brother," quod the feend, "what
tolde I thee?"

Heer may ye see, myn owene dere brother,
The carl⁵ spak oo thing, but he thoghte
another. 270

Lat us go forth abouten our viage;
Heer winne I no-thing up-on cariage."⁶

When that they comen som-what out of
tounne,

This Somnour to his brother gan to rounne,
"Brother," quod he, "heer woneth an old
rebekke," 275

That hadde almost as lief to lese hir nekke
As for to yeve a peny of hir good.

I wol han twelf pens, though that she be wood,⁸
Or I wol sompne hir un-to our offyce;

And yet, god woot, of hir knowe I no vyce. 280
But for thou canst nat, as in this contree,

Winne thy cost, tak heer ensample of me."

This Somnour clappeth at the widwes
gate.

"Com out," quod he, "thou olde viritrate!⁹
I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with
thee!" 285

"Who clappeth?" seyde this widwe,
"ben¹⁰ cite!"

God save you, sire, what is your swete wille?"
"I have," quod he, "of somonce here a
bille;

Up payne of cursing,¹⁰ loke that thou be
To-morn bfore the erchedeknes knee 290

T'answere to the court of certeyn thinges."

"Now, lord," quod she, "Crist Jesu, king
of kinges,

So wisly¹¹ helpe me, as I ne may.
I have been syk, and that ful many a day.

I may nat go so fer," quod she, "ne ryde, 295
I be deed, so priket it in my syde.

May I nat axe a libel,¹² sir Somnour,
And answeere there, by my procutour, 300

To swich thing as men wol opposen me?"
"Yis," quod this Somnour, "pay anon, lat
se, 300

1 beateth. 2 lean forwards. 3 pulled.
4 gray. 5 churl.

6 on account of the peasant's cart and horses—a
technical term in feudal law.

7 dame. 8 mad. 9 hag. 10 excommunication.
11 certainly. 12 ask for a copy of the indictment.
13 legal representative.

Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acquyte.
I shall no profit han ther-by but lyte;
My maister hath the profit, and nat I.

Com of, and lat me ryden hastily;
Yif me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie." 305

"Twelf pens," quod she, "now lady
Seinte Marie

So wisly help me out of care and sinne,
This wyde world thogh that I sholde winne,

Ne have I nat twelf pens with-inne myn
hold.

Ye knowen wel that I am povre and old; 310
Kythe¹ your almesse on me povre wrecche."

"Nay than," quod he, "the foule feend
me fecche

If I th'excuse, though thou shul be spilt!"
"Alas," quod she, "god woot, I have no
gilt."

"Pay me," quod he, "or by the swete
seinte Anne, 315

As I wol bere away thy newe panne
For dette, which that thou owest me of
old,

When that thou madest thyn housbond
cokewold,

I payde at hoom for thy correccioun."
"Thou lixt,"² quod she, "by my sava-
cioun!" 320

Ne was I never er now, widwe ne wyf,
Somoned un-to your court in al my lyf;

Ne never I nas but of my body trewe!
Un-to the devel blak and rough of hewe

Yeve I thy body and my panne also!" 325
And when the devel herde hir cursen so

Up-on hir knees, he seyde in this manere,
"Now Mabely, myn owene moder dere,

Is this your wil in earnest, that ye seye?"
"The devel," quod she, "so fecche him er
he deye, 330

And panne and al, but he wol him repente!"
"Nay, olde stot,³ that is nat myn entente,"

Quod this Somnour, "for to repente me,
For any thing that I have had of thee;

I wolde I hadde thy smok and every
clooth!" 335

"Now, brother," quod the devel, "be nat
wrooth;

Thy body and this panne ben myne by
right.

Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-night,
Where thou shalt knowen of our privetee

More than a maister of divinitee." 340
And with that word this foule feend him
hente;⁴

Body and soule, he with the devel wente
Wher-as that somnours han hir heritage.

And god, that maketh after his image
1 show. 2 liest. 3 beast. 4 seized.

Mankinde, save and gyde us alle and
some; 345

And leve¹ this Somnour good man to bicomel!
Lordinges, I coude han told yow, quod
this Frere,

Hadde I had leyser for this Somnour here,
After the text of Crist and Poul and John,
And of our othere doctours many oon, 350
Swiche paynes, that your hertes mighte
agryse,²

Al-be-it so, no tonge may devyse,
Thogh that I mighte a thousand winter telle,
The peyne of thilke cursed hous of helle.

But, for to kepe us fro that cursed place, 355
Waketh, and preyeth Jesu for his grace
So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.

Herketh this word, beth war as in this cas;
The leoun sit in his await³ alway
To slee the innocent, if that he may. 360

Disposeth ay your hertes to withstonde
The feend, that yow wolde make thral and
bonde.

He may nat tempten yow over your might;
For Crist wol be your champion and knight.
And prayeth that thise Somnours hem re-
pente 365

Of hir misdedes, er that the feend hem hente.

Here endeth the Freres Tale.

THE FRANKLIN'S TALE

The scene is Brittany; the time is, for Chaucer as well as for us, long ago in the days of pagan antiquity. The story is of courtly love, magic, and quixotic loyalty to one's spoken word. The tale is a beautiful example of the short romance, built about a single episode, of the type known in Old French literature as the *lai*. One may read the *lais* of Marie de France in the prose translation of Eugene Mason (Everyman's Library).

THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE

The Prologe of the Frankeleyns Tale

Thise olde gentil Britons in hir dayes
Of diverse aventures maden layes,⁴
Rymeyd in hir firste Briton tonge;
Which layes with hir instruments they songe,
Or elles redden hem for hir plesaunce; 5
And oon of hem have I in remembraunce,
Which I shal seyn with good wil as I can.

But, sires, by-cause I am a burel⁵ man,
At my beginning first I yow biseche
Have me excused of my rude speche; 10
I lerned never rethoryk certeyn;
Thing that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn.

1 permit. 2 shudder. 3 watch. 4 elaborate. 5 unlettered.
4 short romances.

I sleep never on the mount of Pernaso,¹
No lerned Marcus Tullius Cithero.
Colours² ne knowe I none, with-outen
drede, 15

But swiche colours as growen in the mede,
Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte.
Colours of rethoryk ben me to queynte;³
My spirit feleth noght of swich matere.
But if yow list, my tale shul ye here. 20

THE FRANKLIN'S TALE

Here biginneth the Frankeleyns Tale

In Armorik, that called is Britayne,⁴
Ther was a knight that loved and dide his
payne

To serve a lady in his beste wyse;
And many a labour, many a greet empryse⁵
He for his lady wroghte, er she were wonne. 5
For she was oon, the faireste under sonne,
And eek therto come of so heigh kinrede,
That wel unnethes dorste this knight, for
drede,

Telle hir his wo, his peyne, and his distresse.
But atte laste, she, for his worthinesse, 10
And namely⁶ for his meke obeysaunce,
Hath swich a pitee caught of his penaunce,
That prively she fil of his accord⁷
To take him for hir housbonde and hir lord,
Of swich lordshipe as men han over hir
wyves; 15

And for to lede the more in blisse hir lyves,
Of his free wil he swoor hir as a knight,
That never in al his lyf he, day ne night,
Ne sholde up-on him take no maistrye
Agayn hir wil, ne kythe⁸ hir jalousye, 20
But hir obeye, and folwe hir wil in al
As any lover to his lady shal;
Save that the name of soveraynetee,
That wolde he have for shame of his degree.

She thanked him, and with ful greet
humbleesse 25

She seyde, "sire, sith of your gentillesse
Ye profe me to have so large a reyne,⁹
Ne wolde never god bitwixe us tweyne,
As in my gilt, were outhere werre or stryf.
Sir, I wol be your humble trewe wyf, 30
Have heer my trouthe, til that myn herte
breste."

Thus been they bothe in quiete and in reste.

For o thing, sires, sauflly dar I seye,
That frendes everich other moot obeye,
If they wol long holden companye. 35
Love wol nat ben constreyned by maistrye;

1 Parnassus. 2 rhetorical figures.
3 elaborate. 4 Brittany. 5 undertaking.
6 particularly. 7 she agreed with him.
8 show. 9 so generous a control.

Whan maistrie comth, the god of love anon
Beteth hise winges, and farewell! he is gon!
Love is a thing as any spirit free;

Wommen of kinde¹ desiren libertee, 40
And nat to ben constreyned as a thral;
And so don men, if I soth seyen shal.
Loke who that is most pacient in love,
He is at his avantage al above.
Pacience is an heigh vertu certeyn; 45
For it venquisseth, as thise clerkes seyn,
Thinges that rigour sholde never atteyne.
For every word men may nat chyde or
pleyne.²

Lerneth to suffre, or elles, so moot I goon,
Ye shul it lerne, wher-so ye wole or noon. 50
For in this world, certein, ther no wight is,
That he ne dooth or seith som-tyme amis.
Ire, siknesse, or constellacioun,³
Wyn, wo, or chaunginge of complexioun⁴
Causeth ful ofte to doon amis or speken. 55
On every wrong a man may nat be wroken;⁵
After the tyme, moste be temperaunce
To every wight that can on⁶ governaunce.
And therfore hath this wyse worthy knight,
To live in ese, suffrance hir bihight, 60
And she to him ful wisly gan to swere
That never sholde ther be defeaute in here.

Heer may men seen an humble wys accord;
Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord,
Servant in love, and lord in marriage; 65
Than was he bothe in lordship and servage;
Servage? nay, but in lordshipe above,
Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love;
His lady, certes, and his wyf also,
The which that lawe of love acordeth to. 70
And whan he was in this prosperitee,
Hoom with his wyf he gooth to his contree,
Nat fer fro Penmark,⁷ ther his dwelling was,
Wher-as he liveth in blisse and in solas.

Who coude telle, but he had wedded be, 75
The joye, the ese, and the prosperitee
That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wyf?
A yeer and more lasted this blisful lyf,
Til that the knight of which I speke of thus,
That of Kayrrud was cleped Arveragus,⁸ 80
Shoop him⁹ to goon, and dwelte a yeer or
tweyne

In Engelond, that cleped was eek Briteyne,
To seke in armes worship and honour;
For al his lust¹⁰ he sette in swich labour;
And dwelleth ther two yeer, the book seith
thus. 85

Now wol I stinte¹¹ of this Arveragus,

And speken I wole of Dorigene his wyf,
That loveth hir housbonde as hir hertes lyf.
For his absence wepeth she and syketh,¹
As doon thise noble wyves whan hem lyketh.
She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth,
pleyneth; 91

Desyr of his presence hir so distreyneth,
That al this wyde world she sette at noght.
Hir frendes, whiche that knewe hir hevvy
thoght,

Conforten hir in al that ever they may; 95
They prechen hir, they telle hir night and day,
That causeles she sleeth hir-self, allas!
And every confort possible in this cas
They doon to hir with al hir businesse, 100
Al for to make hir leve hir hevinesse. 100

By proces, as ye knowen everichoon,
Men may so longe graven in a stoon,
Til som figure ther-inne emprented be.
So longe han they confortd hir, til she
Receyved hath, by hope and by resoun, 105
Th'emprenting of hir consolacioun,
Thurgh which hir grete sorwe gan aswage;
She may nat alwey duren² in swich rage.

And eek Arveragus, in al this care,
Hath sent hir lettres hoom of his welfare, 110
And that he wol come hastily agayn;
Or elles hadde this sorwe hir herte slayn.

Hir freendes sawe hir sorwe gan to slake,
And preyede hir on knees, for goddes sake,
To come and romen hir³ in companye, 115
Awey to dryve hir derke fantasye.
And finally, she graunted that requeste;
For wel she saugh that it was for the beste.

Now stood hir castel faste by the see,
And often with hir freendes walketh she 120
Hir to disporte up-on the bank an heigh,
Wher-as she many a ship and barge seigh⁴
Seilinge hir cours, wher-as hem liste go;
But than was that a parcel of hir wo.
For to hir-self ful ofte "allas!" seith she, 125
"Is ther no ship, of so manye as I see,
Wol bringen hom my lord? than were myn
herte

Al warished⁵ of his bittre peynes smerte."

Another tyme ther wolde she sitte and
thinke,

And caste hir eyen downward fro the
brinke. 130

But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes blake,
For verray fere so wolde hir herte quake,
That on hir feet she mighte hir noght sustene.
Than wolde she sitte adoun upon the grene,
And pitously in-to the see biholde, 135

And seyn right thus, with sorweful sykes⁶
colde:

1 sigheth. 2 continue. 3 take a walk.
4 saw. 5 cured. 6 sighs.

1 nature. 2 complain. 3 influence of the stars.
4 change of bodily constitution.
5 avenged. 6 knows about.
7 A headland on the west coast of Brittany.
8 was called Arveragus of Kayrrud.
9 made his plans. 10 desire. 11 cease.

"Eterne god, that thurgh thy purvey-
aunce¹

Ledest the world by certain governaunce,
In ydel,² as men seyn, ye no-thing make;
But, lord, these grisly feendly rokkes blake,
That semen rather a foul confusioun¹⁴¹
Of werk than any fair creacioun
Of swich a parfit wys god and a stable,
Why han ye wrought this werk unresonable?
For by this werk, south, north, ne west, ne
eest,¹⁴⁵

Ther nis y-fostred man, ne brid, ne beest;
It dooth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth.³
See ye nat, lord, how mankinde it destroyeth?
An hundred thousand bodies of mankinde
Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in minde,¹⁵⁰
Which mankinde is so fair part of thy werk
That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene
merk.⁴

Than semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee⁵
Toward mankinde; but how than may it be
That ye swiche menes⁶ make it to de-
stroyen,¹⁵⁵

Whiche menes do no good, but ever anoyen?⁷
I woot wel clerkes wol seyn, as hem leste,
By arguments, that al is for the beste,
Though I ne can the causes nat y-knowe.
But tilke god, that made wind to blowe,¹⁶⁰
As kepe my lord! this my conclusioun;
To clerkes lete⁷ I al disputisoun.
But wolde god that alle these rokkes blake
Were sonken in-to helle for his sake!
These rokkes leen myn herte for the fere."¹⁶⁵
Thus wolde she seyn, with many a pitous tere.

Hir freendes sawe that it was no disport
To romen by the see, but discomfort;
And shopen⁸ for to pleyen somwher elles.
They leden hir by riveres and by welles,¹⁷⁰
And eek in othere places delitable;
They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches and
tables.⁹

So on a day, right in the morwe-tyde,
Un-to a gardin that was ther bisyde,
In which that they had maad hir ordi-
naunce¹⁷⁵

Of vitaille and of other purveyaunce,¹⁰
They goon and pleye hem al the longe day.
And this was on the sixte morwe of May,
Which May had peynted with his softe
shoures

This gardin ful of leves and of floures;¹⁸⁰
And craft of mannes hand so curiously
Arrayed hadde this gardin, trewely,
That never was ther gardin of swich prys,¹¹
But-if it were the verray paradys.

Th' odour of floures and the fresshe sighte¹⁸⁵
Wolde han maad any herte for to lighte
That ever was born, but-if to gret siknesse,
Or to gret sorwe helde it in distresse;
So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce.
At-after diner gonne they to daunce,¹⁹⁰
And singe also, save Dorigen allone,
Which made alwey hir complaint and hir
mone;

For she ne saugh him on the daunce go,
That was hir housbonde and hir love also.
But natheles she moste a tyme abyde,¹⁹⁵
And with good hope lete hir sorwe slyde.

Up-on this daunce, amonges othere men,
Daunced a squyer biforen Dorigen,
That fressher was and jolyer of array,
As to my doom,¹ than is the monthe of May.
He singeth, daunceth, passinge any man²⁰¹
That is, or was, sith that the world bigan.
Ther-with he was, if men sholde him dis-
cryve,

Oon of the beste faringe man on-lyve;
Yong, strong, right vertuou, and riche and
wys,²⁰⁵

And wel biloved, and holden in gret prys.
And shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal,
Unwiting of this Dorigen at al,
This lusty squyer, servant to Venus,
Which that y-cleped was Aurelius,²¹⁰
Had loved hir best of any creature
Two yeer and more, as was his aventure,
But never dorste he telle hir his grevaunce;
With-oute coppe² he drank al his penaunce.
He was despeyred, no-thing dorste he
seye,²¹⁵

Save in his songes somewhat wolde he wreye³
His wo, as in a general compleynnyng;
He seyde he lovede, and was biloved nothing.
Of swich matere made he manye layes,
Songes, compleintes, roundels, virelayes,²²⁰
How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,
But languisseth, as a furie dooth in helle;
And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide Ekko
For Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir wo.
In other manere than ye here me seye,²²⁵
Ne dorste he nat to hir his wo biwreye;⁴
Save that, paraventure, som-tyme at
daunces,

Ther yonge folk kepen hir observaunces,
It may wel be he lokod on hir face
In swich a wyse, as man that asketh grace;²³⁰
But no-thing wiste she of his entente.
Natheles, it happed, er they thennes wente,
By-cause that he was hir neighebour,
And was a man of worship and honour,

1 providence. 2 vain. 3 injures. 4 image.
5 love. 6 instruments. 7 leave. 8 arranged.
9 backgammon. 10 provision. 11 esteem.

1 judgment.
2 without cup, i.e. not in small quantities.
3 reveal. 4 reveal.

And hadde ¹ y-knowen him of tyme yore, ²³⁵
They fille in speche; and forth more and
more

Un-to his purpos drough ² Aurelius,
And whan he saugh his tyme, he seyde
thus:

"Madame," quod he, "by god that this
world made,

So that I wiste it mighte your herte glade, ²⁴⁰
I wolde, that day that your Arveragus
Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius,
Had went ther never I sholde have come
agayn;

For wel I woot my service is in vayn.
My guerdon is but bresting ³ of myn herte; ²⁴⁵
Madame, reweth upon my peynes smerte;
For with a word ye may me sleen or save,
Heer at your feet god wolde that I were
grave! ⁴

I ne have as now no leyser more to seye;
Have mercy, swete, or ye wol do me
deye!" ²⁵⁰

She gan to loke up-on Aurelius:
"Is this your wil," quod she, "and sey ye
thus?

Never erst," quod she, "ne wiste I what ye
mente.

But now, Aurelie, I knowe your entente,
By thilke god that yaf me soule and lyf, ²⁵⁵
Ne shal I never been untrewte wyf
In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit:
I wol ben his to whom that I am knit;
Tak this for fynal answer as of me."

But after that in pley thus seyde she: ²⁶⁰
"Aurelie," quod she, "by heighe god
above,

Yet wolde I graunte yow to been your love,
Sin I yow see so pitously complayne;
Loke what day that, endelong ⁵ Britayne,
Ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by
stoon, ²⁶⁵

That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon —
I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so
clene

Of rokkes, that ther nis no stoon y-sene,
Than wol I love yow best of any man;
Have heer my trouthe in al that ever I
can." ²⁷⁰

"Is ther non other grace in yow?" quod he.
"No, by that lord," quod she, "that maked
me!

For wel I woot that it shal never bityde.
Lat swiche folies out of your herte slyde.
What deyntee ⁶ sholde a man han in his
lyf ²⁷⁵

For to go love another mannes wyf,

That hath hir body whan so that him
lyketh?"

Aurelius ful ofte sore syketh; ¹
Wo was Aurelie, whan that he this herde,
And with a sorweful herte he thus an-
swerde: ²⁸⁰

"Madame," quod he, "this were an in-
possible!

Than moot I dye of sodein deth horrible."
And with that word he turned him anon.
Tho come hir othere freendes many oon,
And in the aleyes romeden up and down, ²⁸⁵
And no-thing wiste of this conclusioun,
But sodeinly bigonne revel newe
Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe;
For th'orison ² hath reft the sonne his light;
This is as muche to seye as it was night. ²⁹⁰
And hoom they goon in joye and in solas,
Save only wrecche Aurelius, allas!

He to his hous is goon with sorweful herte;
He seeth he may nat fro his deeth asterter. ³
Him semed that he felte his herte colde; ²⁹⁵
Up to the hevene his handes he gan holde,
And on his knowes ⁴ bare he sette him doun,
And in his raving seyde his orisoun.

For verray wo out of his wit he breyde. ⁵ ✓
He niste what he spak, but thus he seyde; ³⁰⁰
With pitous herte his pleynt hath he bigonne
Un-to the goddes, and first un-to the sonne:

He seyde, "Appollo, god and governour
Of every plaunte, herbe, tree and flour,
That yevest, after thy declinacioun, ³⁰⁵
To ech of hem his tyme and his sesoun,
As thyn herberwe ⁷ chaungeth lowe or hye,
Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable yē
On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorn.
Lo, lord! my lady hath my deeth y-sworn ³¹⁰
With-oute gilt, but ⁸ thy benignitee
Upon my dedly herte have som pitee!
For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow lest,
Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.

Now voucheth sauf that I may yow de-
vyse ³¹⁵
How that I may been hōlpe and in what
wyse.

Your blisful suster, Lucina ⁹ the shene, ¹⁰
That of the see is chief goddesse and quene, ¹¹
Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,
Yet emperesse aboven him is she: ³²⁰
Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir desyr
Is to be quiked ¹² and lightned of your fyr,
For which she folweth yow ful bisily,
Right so the see desyareth naturelly

¹ sigheth. ² the horizon. ³ escape.

⁴ knees. ⁵ he went out of his wits.

⁶ according to thy height in the sky (at different sea-
sons of the year).

⁷ dwelling place. ⁸ unless. ⁹ Diana, the Moon.

¹⁰ bright. ¹¹ Because she controls the tides.

¹² endowed with life.

¹ The subject is Dorigen.

² drew.

³ breaking. ⁴ buried.

⁵ all along. ⁶ pleasure.

To folwen hir, as she that is goddesse 325
 Bothe in the see and riveres more and lesse.
 Wherefore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste —
 Do this miracle, or do myn herte breste —
 That now, next at this opposicioun,¹
 Which in the signe shal be of the Leoun, 330
 As preyeth hir so greet a flood to bringe,
 That fyve fadme at the leeste it overspringe
 The hyeste rokke in Armorik Briteyne;
 And lat this flood endure yeres tweyne;
 Than certes to my lady may I seye: 335
 'Holdeth your heste,² the rokkes been
 aweye.'

Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle for me;
 Preye hir she go no faster cours than ye;
 I seye, preyeth your suster that she go
 No faster cours than ye thise yeres two.³ 340
 Than shal she been evene atte fulle alway,
 And spring-flood laste bothe night and day.
 And, but she vouche-sauf in swiche manere
 To graunte me my sovereyn lady dere,
 Prey hir to sinken every rok adoun 345
 In-to hir owene derke regioun⁴
 Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth inne,
 Or never-mo shal I my lady winne.
 Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seke;
 Lord Phebus, see the teres on my cheke, 350
 And of my peyne have som compassioun."
 And with that word in sowne he fil adoun,
 And longe tyme he lay forth in a trauance.

His brother, which that knew of his pen-
 aunce,
 Up caughte him and to bedde he hath him
 broght. 355

Dispyred in this torment and this thoght
 Lete I this woful creature lye;
 Chese he, for me, whether he wol live or dye.

Arveragus, with hele⁵ and greet honour,
 As he that was of chivalrye the flour, 360
 Is comen hoom, and othere worthy men.
 O blisful artow now, thou Dorigen,
 That hast thy lusty housbonde in thyne
 armes,

The fresshe knight, the worthy man of armes,
 That loveth thee, as his owene hertes lyf. 365
 No-thing list him to been imaginatyf⁶
 If any wight had spoke, whyl he was oute,
 To hire of love; he hadde of it no doute.⁷
 He noght intendeth to no swich matere,
 But daunceth, justeth, maketh hir good
 chere; 370

And thus in joye and blisse I lete hem dwelle,
 And of the syke Aurelius wol I telle.

In langour and in torment furious
 Two yer and more lay wrecche Aurelius,
 Er any foot he mighte on erthe goon; 375
 Ne confort in this tyme hadde he noon,
 Save of his brother, which that was a
 clerk;¹

He knew of al this wo and al this werk.
 For to non other creature certeyn
 Of this matere he dorste no word seyn. 380
 Under his brest he bar it more secree
 Than ever dide Pamphilus² for Galathee.
 His brest was hool, with-oute for to sene,
 But in his herte ay was the arwe kene.
 And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure³ 385
 In surgerye is perilous the cure,
 But men mighte touche the arwe, or come
 therby.

His brother weep and wayled prively,
 Til atte laste him fil in remembraunce,
 That whyl he was at Orliens in Fraunce, 390
 As yonge clerkes, that been likerous,⁴
 To reden artes that been curious,⁵
 Seken in every halke and every herne⁶
 Particuler sciences for to lerne,
 He him remembered that, upon a day, 395
 At Orliens in studie a book he say⁷
 Of magik naturel, which his felawe,
 That was that tyme a bachelor of lawe,
 Al were he⁸ ther to lerne another craft,
 Had prively upon his desk y-laft; 400
 Which book spak muchel of the operaciouns,
 Touchinge the eighte and twenty mansiouns
 That longten to⁹ the mone, and swich folye,
 As in our dayes is nat worth a flye;
 For holy chirches feith in our bileve 405
 Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve.
 And when this book was in his remem-
 braunce,

Anon for joye his herte gan to daunce,
 And to him-self he seyde prively:
 "My brother shal be warissed¹⁰ hastily; 410
 For I am siker¹¹ that ther be sciences,
 By whiche men make diverse apparences
 Swiche as thise subtil tregetoures¹² pleye.
 For ofte at festes have I wel herd seye,
 That tregetours, with-inne a halle large, 415
 Have maad come in a water and a barge,
 And in the halle rowen up and down.
 Somtyme hath semed come a grim leoun;
 And somtyme floures springe as in a mede;
 Somtyme a vyne, and grapes whyte and
 rede; 420

1 scholar.

2 Reputed author of a medieval Latin love-poem in praise of a lady named Galatea.

3 a wound healed outwardly but not inwardly.

4 desirous. 5 magical.

6 in every hiding-place and corner.

7 saw.

8 although he was.

9 belong to.

10 cured.

11 sure.

12 jugglers.

1 i.e. at the full moon. 2 promise.
 3 i.e. that the moon remain full continuously for two years.

4 Under the name of Hecate, Diana is goddess of Hades.

5 health. 6 It never occurred to him to guess.

7 fear.

Somtyme a castel, al of lym and stoon;
And whan hem lyked, voyded ¹ it anoon.
Thus semed it to every mannes sighte.

Now than conclude I thus, that if I mighte
At Orliens som old felawe y-finde, ⁴²⁵
That hadde this mones mansions in minde,
Or other magik naturel above,
He sholde wel make my brother han his love.
For with an apparence a clerk may make
To mannes sighte, that alle the rokkes
blake ⁴³⁰

Of Britaigne weren y-voyled everichon,
And shippes by the brinke comen and gon,
And in swich forme endure a day or two;
Than were my brother warissed of his wo.
Than moste she nedes holden hir behest, ⁴³⁵
Or elles he shal shame hir atte leste."

What sholde I make a lenger tale of this?
Un-to his brotheres bed he comen is,
And swich confort he yaf him for to gon
To Orliens, that he up stirte anon, ⁴⁴⁰
And on his wey forthward thanne is he fare,
In hope for to ben lissed ² of his care.

Whan they were come almost to that citee,
But-if it were a two furlong or three,
A yong clerk rominge by him-self they
mette, ⁴⁴⁵

Which that in Latin thriftily hem grette,³
And after that he seyde a wonder thing:
"I knowe," quod he, "the cause of your
coming";

And er they fether any fote wente,
He tolde hem al that was in hir entente. ⁴⁵⁰

This Briton clerk him asked of felawes
The whiche that he had knowe in olde
dawes;⁴

And he answerde him that they dede were,
For which he weep ful ofte many a tere.

Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte anon, ⁴⁵⁵
And forth with this magicien is he gon
Hoom to his hous, and made hem wel at ese.
Hem lakked no vitaille that mighte hem
plese;

So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon ⁵
Aurelius in his lyf saugh never noon. ⁴⁶⁰

He shewed him, er he wente to sopeer,
Forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer;
Ther saugh he hertes ⁶ with hir hornes hye,
The gretteste that ever were seyn with yē.
He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with
houndes, ⁴⁶⁵
And somme with arwes blede of bittre
woundes.

He saugh, whan voided were thise wilde deer,
Thise fauconers upon a fair river,

That with hir haukes han the heron slayn.
Tho saugh he knyghtes justing in a playn; ⁴⁷⁰
And after this, he dide him swich plesaunce,
That he him shewed his lady on a daunce
On which him-self he daunced, as him
thoughte.

And whan this maister, that this magik
wroughte,
Saughe it was tyme, he clapte his handes
two, ⁴⁷⁵

And farewell! al our revel ⁷ was ago.
And yet remoeved they never out of the
hous,

Whyl they saugh al this sighte merveillous,
But in his studie, ther-as his bookes be,
They seten stille, and no wight but they
three. ⁴⁸⁰

To him this maister called his squyer,
And seyde him thus: "is redy our soper?
Almost an houre it is, I undertake,
Sith I yow bad our soper for to make,
Whan that thise worthy men wenten with
me ⁴⁸⁵

In-to my studie, ther-as my bookes be."
"Sire," quod this squyer, "whan it lyketh
yow,

It is al redy, though ye wol right now."
"Go we than soupe," quod he, "as for the
beste;

This amorous folk som-tyme mote han
reste." ⁴⁹⁰

At-after soper fille they in tretree,²
What somme sholde this maistres guer-
don be,

To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne,
And eek from Gerounde³ to the mouth of
Sayne.

He made it straunge,⁴ and swoor, so god
him save, ⁴⁹⁵

Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat
have,

Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon.

Aurelius, with blisful herte anon,
Answerde thus, "fy on a thousand pound!

This wyde world, which that men seye is
-round, ⁵⁰⁰

I wolde it yeve, if I were lord of it.
This bargayn is ful drive,⁵ for we ben knit.⁶
Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe!
But loketh now, for no negligence or slouthe,
Ye tarie us heer no lenger than to-morwe." ⁵⁰⁵
"Nay," quod this clerk, "have heer my
feith to borwe." ⁷

To bedde is goon Aurelius whan him leste,
And wel ny al that night he hadde his reste;

¹ sent away. ² relieved. ³ greeted. ⁴ days.

⁵ So well furnished a house as that one was.
⁶ stags.

¹ entertainment.

³ the Gironde river,
⁵ completed.

² discussion.

⁴ He held off.
⁶ agreed.

⁷ as pledge.

What for his labour and his hope of blisse,
His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse.¹ 510

Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,
To Britaigne toke they the righte way,
Aurelius, and this magicien bisyde,
And been descended ther they wolde abyde;
And this was, as the bokes me remembre,
The colde frosty seson of Decembre.

Phibus wex old,² and hewed lyk latoun,³
That in his hote declinacioun
Shoon as the burned⁴ gold with stremes
bryghte;

But now in Capricorn⁵ adoun he lighte, 520
Wher-as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel seyn.
The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn,
Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.
Janus⁶ sit by the fyr, with double berd,
And drinketh of his bugle-horn the wyn. 525
Biforn him stant braun of the tusked swyn,
And "Nowel"⁷ cryeth every lusty man.

Aurelius, in al that ever he can,
Doth to his maister chere and reverence,
And preyeth him to doon his diligence 530
To bringen him out of his peynes smerte,
Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his
herte.

This subtil clerk swich routhe⁸ had of this
man,
That night and day he spedde him that he
can,

To wayte a tyme of his conclusioun; 535
This is to seye, to make illusioun,
By swich an apparence or jogelrye,
I ne can no termes of astrologye,
That she and every wight sholde wene and
seye,

That of Britaigne the rokkes were aweye, 540
Or elles they were sonken under grounde.
So atte laste he hath his tyme y-founde
To maken his japes⁹ and his wretchednesse
Of swich a superstitious cursdnesse.

His tables Toletanes¹⁰ forth he broght, 545
Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked noght,
Neither his collect ne his expans yeres,¹¹
Ne his rotes ne his othere geres,

As been his centres and his arguments, 550
And his proporcionels conveniens
For his equacions in every thing.

And, by his eighte spere in his wirking,
He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove
Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above

1 relief. 2 The Sun grew old, i.e. it was winter.

3 latten, a composition metal of dull hue.

4 burnished.

5 The Sun enters the Zodiacal Sign of Capricorn in December.

6 The god for whom the month of January is named.

7 Merry Christmas.

8 pity.

9 tricks.

10 astronomical tables.

11 In lines 547-62, we have a series of technical terms from the science of astrology.

That in the ninthe speere considered is; 555
Ful subtilly he calculed al this.

Whan he had founde his firste mansioun,
He knew the remenant by proporcioun;
And knew the arysing of his mone weel,
And in whos face, and terme, and every-
deel; 560

And knew ful weel the mones mansioun
Acordaunt to his operacioun,
And knew also his othere observaunces
For swiche illusiouns and swiche meschaunces
As hethen folk used in thilke dayes; 565
For which no lenger maketh he delayes,
But thurgh his magik, for a wyke¹ or tweye,
It semed that alle the rokkes were aweye.

Aurelius, which that yet despeired is
Wher² he shal han his love or fare amis, 570
Awaiteth night and day on this miracle;
And whan he knew that ther was noon ob-
stacle,

That voided were these rokkes everichon,
Doun to his maistres feet he fil³ anon,
And seyde, "I woful wrecche, Aurelius, 575
Thanke yow, lord, and lady myn Venus,
That me han holpen fro my cares colde;"
And to the temple his wey forth hath he
holde,

Wher-as he knew he sholde his lady see.
And whan he saugh his tyme, anon-right
he, 580
With dredful⁴ herte and with ful humble
chere,

Salewed⁵ hath his sovereyn lady dere:

"My righte lady," quod this woful man,
"Whom I most drede and love as I best can,
And lothest were of al this world displese, 585
Nere it that I for yow have swich disese,
That I moste dyen heer at your foot anon,
Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon;
But certes outhur moste I dye or pleyne;
Ye slee me giltelees for verray payne. 590
But of my deeth, thogh that ye have no
routhe,

Avyseth yow, er that ye breke your trouthe.
Repenteth yow, for thilke god above,
Er ye me sleen by-cause that I yow love.
For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han
hight;⁶ 595

Nat that I chalange any thing of right
Of yow my sovereyn lady, but your grace;
But in a gardin yond, at swich a place,
Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me;
And in myn hand your trouthe plighthen
ye 600

To love me best, god woot, ye seyde so,
Al be that I unworthy be therto.

1 week.
4 timid.

2 whether.
5 saluted.

3 fell.
6 promised.

Madame, I speke it for the honour of yow,
More than to save myn hertes lyf right
now;

I have do so as ye comanded me; 605
And if ye vouche-sauf, ye may go see.
Doth as yow list, have your biheste in minde,
For quik or deed, right ther ye shul me finde;
In yow lyth al, to do me live or deye; —
But wel I woot the rokkes been aweye!" 610

He taketh his leve, and she astonied stood,
In al hir face nas a drope of blood;
She wende never han come in swich a trappe:
"Allas!" quod she, "that ever this sholde
happe!

For wende I never, by possibilittee, 615
That swich a monstre or merveille mighte be!
It is agayns the proces of nature:"

And hoom she gooth a sorweful creature.
For verray fere unnethe¹ may she go,²
She wepeth, wailleth, al a day or two, 620
And swowneth, that it routhe was to see;
But why it was, to no wight tolde she;
For out of toune was goon Arveragus.
But to hir-self she spak, and seyde thus,
With face pale and with ful sorweful
chere, 625

In hir compleynt, as ye shul after here:
"Allas," quod she, "on thee, Fortune,
I pleyne,

That unwar³ wrapped hast me in thy cheyne;
For which, t'escape, woot I no socour
Save only deeth or elles dishonour; 630
Oon of thise two bihoveth me to chese.
But natheles, yet have I lever lese⁴
My lyf than of my body have a shame,
Or knowe my-selven fals, or lese my name,
And with my deth I may be quit, y-wis. 635
Hath ther nat many a noble wyf, er this,
And many a mayde y-slayn hir-self, alas!
Rather than with hir body doon trespas?

Yis, certes, lo, thise stories⁵ beren wit-
nesse;

Whan thretty tyraunts, ful of cursed-
nesse, 640

Had slayn Phidoun in Athenes, atte feste,
They comanded his doghtres for t'arest, e,
And bringen hem biforn hem in despyt
Al naked, to fulfillle hir foul delyt,
And in hir fadres blood they made hem
daunce 645

Upon the pavement, god yeve hem mis-
chaunce!

For which thise woful maydens, ful of drede,
Rather than they wolde lese hir mayden-
hede,

They prively ben stirt¹ in-to a welle,
And dreynthe² hem-selven, as the bokes
telle. 650

They of Messene lete enquire and seke
Of Lacedomie fifty maydens eke,
On whiche they wolden doon hir lecherye;
But was ther noon of al that companye
That she nas slayn, and with a good en-
tente 655

Chees rather for to dye than assente
To been oppressed of hir maydenhede.
Why sholde I thanne to dye been in drede?
Lo, eek, the tiraunt Aristoclide
That loved a mayden, heet³ Stimphali-
des, 660

Whan that hir fader slayn was on a night,
Un-to Dianes temple goth she right,
And hente the image in hir handes two,
Fro which image wolde she never go.
No wight ne mighte hir handes of it arace,⁴ 665
Til she was slayn right in the selve place.
Now sith that maydens hadden swich despyt
To been defouled with mannes foul delyt,
Wel oghte a wyf rather hir-selven slee
Than be defouled, as it thinketh me. 670

What shal I seyn of Hasdrubales wyf,
That at Cartage birafted hir-self hir lyf?
For whan she saugh that Romayns wan the
toun,

She took hir children alle, and skipte adoun
In-to the fyr, and chees rather to dye 675
Than any Romayn dide hir vileinye.

Hath nat Lucesse y-slayn hir-self, alas!
At Rome, whanne she oppressed was
Of Tarquin, for hir thoughte it was a shame
To liven whan she hadde lost hir name? 680

The sevene maydens of Milesie also
Han slayn hem-self, for verray drede and wo,
Rather than folk of Gaule hem sholde
oppressen.

Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,
Coude I now telle as touchinge this mat-
ere. 685

Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so
dere

Hirselven slow, and leet hir blood to glyde
In Habradates woundes depe and wyde,
And seyde, 'my body, at the leeste way,
Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may.' 690

What sholde I mo⁵ ensamples heer-of
sayn,

Sith that so manye han hem-selven slayn
Wel rather than they wolde defouled be?
I wol conclude, that it is bet for me
To sleen my-self, than been defouled thus. 695
I wol be trewe un-to Arveragus,

¹ hardly.

³ without my knowledge.

² walk.

⁴ I had rather lose.

⁵ The stories which follow are all taken from St. Jerome *Contra Jovinianum*.

¹ They secretly jumped.

³ called. ⁴ tear away.

² drowned.

⁵ more.

Or rather sleen my-self in som manere,
As dide Demociones doghter dere,
By-cause that she wolde nat defouled be.

O Cedasus! it is ful greet pitee, 700
To reden how thy doghtren deydre, allas!
That slowe hem-selven for swich maner cas.¹

As greet a pitee was it, or wel more,
The Theban mayden, that for Nichanore
Hir-selven slow, right for swich maner wo. 705

Another Theban mayden dide right so;
For oon of Macedoine hadde hir oppressed,
She with hir deeth hir maydenhede re-
dressed.

What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,
That for swich cas birafted hir-self hir lyf? 710
How trewe eek was to Alcebiades

His love, that rather for to dyen chees
Than for to suffre his body unburiid be!
Lo which a wyf was Alcestè," quod she.

"What seith Omer of gode Penalopee? 715
Al Grece knoweth of hir chastitee.

Pardee, of Laodomya is writen thus,
That than at Troye was slayn Protheselaus,
No lenger wolde she live after his day.

The same of noble Porcia telle I may; 720
With-oute Brutus coude she nat live,
To whom she hadde al hool hir herte yive.

The parfit wyfthod of Arthemesye
Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarye.²

O Teuta, queen! thy wyfly chastitee 725
To alle wywes may a mirour be.
The same thing I seye of Bilia,
Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria."

Thus pleyned Dorigene a day or tweye,
Purposing ever that she wolde deye. 730

But nathelees, upon the thridde night,
Hom cam Arveragus, this worthy knight,
And asked hir, why that she weep so sore?
And she gan wepen ever lenger the more.

"Allas!" quod she, "that ever was I
born! 735

Thus have I seyde," quod she, "thus have I
sworn" —

And told him al as ye han herd bifore;
It nedeth nat reherce it yow na-more.

This housbond with glad chere, in frendly
wyse,

Answerde and seyde as I shal yow devyise: 740
"Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this?"

"Nay, nay," quod she, "god help me so,
as wis;³

This is to muche, and it were goddes wille."
"Ye, wyf," quod he, "lat slepen that is
stille;⁴

It may be wel, paraventure, yet to-day. 745
Ye shul your trouthe holden, by my fay!

For god so wisly have mercy on me,
I hadde wel lever y-stiked for to be,¹
For verray love which that I to yow have,
But-if² ye sholde your trouthe kepe and
save. 750

Trouthe is the hyeste thing that man may
kepe:" —

But with that word he brast³ anon to wepe,
And seyde, "I yow forbede, up⁴ peyne of
deeth,

That never, whyl thee lasteth lyf ne breeth,
To no wight tel thou of this aventure. 755

As I may best, I wol my wo endure,
Ne make no contenance⁵ of hevynesse,

That folk of yow may demen harm or
gesse."

And forth he cleped a squyer and a mayde:
"Goth forth anon with Dorigen," he
sayde, 760

"And bringeth hir to swich a place anon."
They take hir leve, and on hir wey they
gon;

But they ne wiste why she thider wente.
He nolde no wight tellen his entente.

Paraventure an heap of yow, y-wis, 765
Wol holden him a lewed⁶ man in this,

That he wol putte his wyf in jupartye;⁷
Herkeneth the tale, er ye up-on hir crye.

She may have bettre fortune than yow
semeth;

And whan that ye han herd the tale, dem-
eth. 770

This squyer, which that highte Aurelius,
On Dorigen that was so amorous,

Of aventure happed hir to mete
Amidde the toun, right in the quikkest⁸

strete,
As she was boun⁹ to goon the wey forth-
right 775

Toward the gardin ther-as she had hight.¹⁰
And he was to the gardinward also;

For wel he spyed, whan she wolde go
Out of hir hous to any maner place.

But thus they mette, of aventure or grace; 780
And he saleweth hir with glad entente,

And asked of hir whiderward she wente?
And she answerde, half as she were
mad,

"Un-to the gardin, as myn housbond bad,
My trouthe for to holde, allas! allas!" 785

Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,
And in his herte had greet compassioun

Of hir and of hir lamentacioun,
And of Arveragus, the worthy knight,

That bad hir holden al that she had hight, 790

1 in a case of such sort.
3 as (it is) certain.

2 land of the barbarians.
4 i.e. let sleeping dogs lie.

1 I had much rather be stabbed.
3 burst. 4 on. 5 show no appearance.
6 foolish. 7 jeopardy. 8 liveliest.
9 prepared. 10 promised.

So looth him was his wyf sholde breke hir
trouthe;

And in his herte he caughte of this greet
routhe,

Consideringe the beste on every syde,
That fro his lust yet were him lever abyde
Than doon so heigh a cherlish wrecched-
nesse 795

Agayns franchyse ¹ and alle gentillesse;
For which in fewe wordes seyde he thus:

"Madame, seyth to your lord Arveragus,
That sith I see his grete gentillesse
To yow, and eek I see wel your distresse, 800
That him were lever han shame (and that
were routhe)

Than ye to me sholde breke thus your
trouthe,

I have wel lever ever to suffre wo
Than I departe ² the love bitwix yow two.

I yow relese, madame, in-to your hond 805
Quit every surement ³ and every bond,

That ye han maad to me as heer-biforn,
Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born.

My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never
repreve

Of no biheste, and here I take my leve, 810
As of the treweste and the beste wyf

That ever yet I knew in al my lyf.
But every wyf be-war of hir biheste,

On Dorigene remembreth atte leste.
Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede, 815

As well as can a knight, with-outen drede."
She thonketh him up-on hir knees al bare,

And hoom un-to hir housbond is she fare,
And tolde him al as ye han herd me sayd;⁴

And be ye siker, he was so weel apayd,⁵ 820
That it were impossible me to wryte;

What sholde I lenger of this cas endyte?
Arveragus and Dorigene his wyf

In sovereyn blisse leden forth hir lyf.
Never eft ne was ther angre hem bitwene; 825

He cheriseth hir as though she were a
quene;

And she was to him trewe for evermore.
Of thise two folk ye gete of me na-more.

Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlorn,⁶
Curseth the tyme that ever he was born: 830

"Allas," quod he, "allas! that I bihighte
Of pure gold a thousand pound of wighte

Un-to this philosopre!⁷ how shal I do?
I see na-more but that I am fordo.⁸

Myn heritage moot I nedes selle, 835
And been a begger; heer may I nat dwelle,

And shamen al my kinrede in this place,
But I of him may gete bettre grace.

But nathelees, I wol of him assaye,
At certeyn dayes, yeer by yeer, to paye, 840
And thanke him of his grete curteisye;
My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol nat lye."

With herte soor he gooth un-to his cofre,
And broghte gold un-to this philosopre,

The value of fyve hundred pound, I gesse, 845
And him bisecheth, of his gentillesse,

To graunte him dayes of the remenaunt,
And seyde, "maister, I dar wel make avaunt,¹

I failed never of my trouthe as yit;
For sikerly my dette shal be quit 850

Towards yow, how-ever that I fare
To goon a-begged in my kirtle bare.²

But wolde ye vouche-sauf, up-on seurtee,
Two year or three for to respyten me,

Than were I wel; for elles moot I selle 855
Myn heritage; ther is na-more to telle."

This philosopre sobrely answerde,
And seyde thus, whan he thise wordes herde:

"Have I nat holden covenant un-to thee?"

"Yes, certes, wel and trewely," quod he. 860
"Hastow nat had thy lady as thee lyketh?"

"No, no," quod he, and sorwefully he
syketh.³

"What was the cause? tel me if thou can."
Aurelius his tale anon bigan,

And tolde him al, as ye han herd bifore; 865
It nedeth nat to yow reherce it more.

He seide, "Arveragus, of gentillesse,
Had lever dye in sorwe and in distresse

Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe fals."
The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him als,⁴ 870

How looth hir was to been a wikked wyf,
And that she lever had lost that day hir lyf,

And that hir trouthe she swoor, thurgh in-
nocence:

"She never erst herde speke of apparence;⁵
That made me han of hir so greet pitee. 875

And right as frely as he sente hir me,
As frely sente I hir to him ageyn.

This al and som, ther is na-more to seyn."

This philosopre answerde, "leve brother,
Everich of yow dide gentilly til other. 880

Thou art a squyer, and he is a knight;
But god forbode, for his blisful might,

But-if a clerk coude doon a gentil dede
As well as any of yow, it is no drede!⁶

Sire, I relese thee thy thousand pound, 885
As thou right now were copen ⁷ out of the
ground,

Ne never er now ne haddest knowen me.
For sire, I wol nat take a peny of thee

For al my craft, ne noght for my travaille.
Thou hast y-paid wel for my vitaille; 890

¹ generosity. ² put asunder.

³ every pledge discharged. ⁴ say. ⁵ pleased.

⁶ lost. ⁷ i.e. the magician. ⁸ ruined.

¹ boast.

² To go a-begging clothed only in a short coat.

³ sigheth.

⁴ also.

⁵ illusion caused by magic.

⁶ doubt.

⁷ had crept.

It is y-nogh, and farewel, have good day:"
And took his hors, and forth he gooth his
way.

Lordinges,¹ this question wolde I aske
now,

Which was the moste free,¹ as thinketh
yow?

Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.
I can na-more, my tale is at an ende. 896

Here is ended the Frankeleyns Tale

THE MINOR POEMS

THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS

The poem presents under the veil of graceful allegory the courtship by three rival suitors of some great lady of Chaucer's day. Many critics have believed that the lady, the "formel egle," is the Princess Anne of Bohemia, who in January 1382 became the queen of Richard II of England, that the "tercel egle" is Richard, and that the two eagles "of lower kinde" are two continental princes who had been suitors for the hand of Princess Anne. But this identification is far from certain. The form of the poem combines two medieval types, the dream-vision and the "debate," the latter a poem in which an unsolved problem is left to the reader's decision — which of the three suitors deserves the lady? Into the poem Chaucer has put the fruit of much reading. The description of the garden is from the *Teseide* of Boccaccio; the picture of the goddess Nature is from a writer in medieval Latin, Alanus de Insulis. The parliament itself, where the various classes of birds humorously represent different ranks of society, is, so far as we know, Chaucer's own invention.

The Proem

The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne,
Th'assay so hard, so sharp the conquering,
The dredful joye, that alwey slit so yerne,²
Al this mene I by love, that my feling
Astonyeth with his wonderful worching 5
So sore y-wis, that than I on him thinke,
Nat wot I wel wher³ that I wake or winke.

For al be that I knowe not love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quyeth folk hir hyre,
Yet happeth me ful ofte in bokes rede 10
Of his miracles, and his cruel yre;
Ther rede I wel he wol be lord and syre,
I dar not seyn, his strokes been so sore,
But god save swich a lord! I can no more.

Of usage, what for luste⁴ what for lore,⁵ 15
On bokes rede I ofte, as I yow tolde.
But wherfor that I speke al this? not yore

Agon, hit happed me for to beholde
Upon a boke, was write with lettres olde;
And ther-upon, a certeyn thing to lerne, 20
The longe day ful faste I radde and yerne.²

For out of olde feldes, as men seith,
Cometh al this newe corn fro yeer to yere;
And out of olde bokes, in good feith,
Cometh al this newe science that men lere.
But now to purpos as of this matere — 26
To rede forth hit gan me so delyte,
That al the day me thoughte but a lyte.

This book of which I make mencion,
Entitled was al thus, as I shal telle, 30
"Tullius of the dreame of Scipioun";³
Chapitres seven hit hadde, of hevене and
helle,

And erthe, and soules that therinne dwelle,
Of whiche, as shortly as I can hit trete,
Of his sentence I wol you seyn the grete. 35

First telleth hit, whan Scipioun was come
In Afrik, how he mette Massinisse,
That him for joye in armes hath y-nome.
Than telleth hit hir speche and al the blisse
That was betwix hem, til the day gan 40
misse;

And how his auncestre, African so dere,
Gan in his slepe that night to him appere.

Than telleth hit that, fro a sterry place,
How African hath him Cartage shewed,
And warned him before of al his grace, 45
And seyde him, what man, lered other lewed,⁴
That loveth comun profit, wel y-thewed,⁵
He shal unto a blisful place wende,
Ther as joye is that last withouten ende.
Than asked he, if folk that heer be dede 50
Have lyf and dwelling in another place;
And African seyde, "ye, withoute drede,"
And that our present worldes lyves space
Nis but a maner deth, what wey we trace,
And rightful folk shal go, after they dye, 55
To hevën; and shewed him the galaxye.

¹ generous. ² eagerly.

³ The "Dream of Scipio" is a portion of Cicero's *De Republica*.

⁴ learned or ignorant.

⁵ well conducted.

¹ The Franklin is addressing his fellow pilgrims.

² slides away so soon.

³ whether.

⁴ pleasure.

⁵ instruction.

Than shewed he him the litel erthe, that
heer is,

At regard of the hevenes quantite;
And after shewed he him the nyne speres,¹
And after that the melodye herde he 60
That cometh of thilke speres thryes three,
That welle is of musyke and melodye
In this world heer, and cause of armonye.

Than bad he him, sin erthe was so lyte,
And ful of torment and of harde grace, 65
That he ne shulde him in the world delyte.
Than tolde he him, in certeyn yeres space,
That every sterre shulde come into his place
Ther hit was first; and al shulde out of minde
That in this worlde is don of al mankinde.

Than prayde him Scipioun to telle him al 71
The wey to come un-to that hevene blisse;
And he seyde, "know thy-self first immortal,
And loke ay besily thou werke and wisse 2
To comun profit, and thou shalt nat misse 75
To comen swiftly to that place dere,
That ful of blisse is and of soules clere.

But brekers of the lawe, soth to seyne,
And lecherous folk, after that they be dede,
Shul alwey whirle aboute th'erthe in payne, 80
Til many a world be passed, out of drede,
And than, for-yeven alle hir wikked dede,
Than shul they come unto that blisful place,
To which to comen god thee sende his
grace!" —

The day gan failen, and the derke night, 85
That reveth bestes from hir besinesse,
Berafte me my book for lakke of light,
And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse,
Fulfuld of thought and besy hevinesse;
For bothe I hadde thing which that I
nolde, 90
And eek I ne hadde that thing that I wolde.

But fynally my spirit, at the laste,
For-wery of my labour al the day,
Took rest, that made me to slepe faste,
And in my slepe I mette,³ as I lay, 95
How African, right in that selfe aray
That Scipioun him saw before that tyde,
Was comen, and stood right at my beddes
syde.

The wery hunter, slepinge in his bed,
To wode ayein his minde goth anon; 100
The juge dremeth how his plees ben sped;

¹ In the old astronomy, the motion of the heavenly bodies was explained as due to the revolutions of nine concentric transparent spheres about the central earth.
² point the way. ³ dreamed.

The carter dremeth how his cartes goon;
The riche, of gold; the knight fight with his
foon,

The seke met he drinketh of the tonne;
The lover met he hath his lady wonne. 105

Can I nat seyn if that the cause were
For I had red of African beforne,
That made me to mete that he stood there;
But thus seyde he, "thou hast thee so wel
born
In loking of myn olde book to-torn, 110
Of which Macrobie roghte nat a lyte,¹
That somdel of thy labour wolde I quyte!" —

Citherea!² thou blisful lady swete,
That with thy fyr-brand dauntest whom
thee lest,

And madest me this sweven³ for to mete, 115
Be thou my help in this, for thou mayst best;
As wisly as I saw thee north-north-west,
When I began my sweven for to wryte,
So yif me might to ryme hit and endyte!

The Story

This forseid African me hente⁴ anon, 120
And forth with him unto a gate broghte
Right of a parke, walled with grene stoon;
And over the gate, with lettres large
y-wroghte,
Ther weren vers y-writen, as me thoghte,
On eyther halfe, of ful gret difference, 125
Of which I shal yow sey the pleyn sentence.

"Thorgh me men goon in-to that blisful
place
Of hertes hele⁵ and dedly woundes cure;
Thorgh me men goon unto the welle of Grace,
Ther grene and lusty May shal ever en-
dure; 130

This is the wey to al good aventure;
Be glad, thou reder, and thy sorwe of-caste,
Al open am I; passe in, and hy the faste!"

"Thorgh me men goon," than spak that
other syde,

"Unto the mortal strokes of the spere, 135
Of which Disdayn and Daunger is the gyde,
Ther tree shal never fruit ne leves bere.
This streem you ledeth to the sorwful wure,⁶
Ther as the fish in prison is al drye;
Th'eschewing is only the remedye." 140

Thise vers of gold and blak y-writen were,
The whiche I gan a stounde⁷ to beholde,

¹ Macrobius wrote a famous commentary on the Dream of Scipio.
² Venus. ³ dream. ⁴ took.
⁵ health. ⁶ weir. ⁷ while.

For with that oon encreased ay my fere,
And with that other gan myn herte bolde;
That oon me hette, that other did me
colde,

145

No wit had I, for errour, for to chese,
To entre or flee, or me to save or lese.

Right as, betwixen adamauntes ¹ two ✓
Of even might, a pece of iren y-set,
That hath no might to meve to ne fro — 150
For what that on may hale, that other let —
Ferde I, that niste whether me was bet,
To entre or leve, til African my gyde
Me hente, and shoof in at the gates wyde,

And seyde, "hit stondeh written in thy
face,

155

Thyn errour, though thou telle it not to me;
But dred thee nat to come in-to this place,
For this wryting is no-thing ment by thee,
Ne by noon, but he Loves servant be;
For thou of love hast lost thy tast, I
gesse,

160

As seek man hath of swete and bitternesse.

But natheles, al-though that thou be dulle,
Yit that thou canst not do, yit mayst thou
see;

For many a man that may not stonde a pulle,
Yit lyketh him at the wrastling for to be, 165
And demeth yit wher ² he do bet or he;
And if thou haddest cunning for t'endyte,
I shal thee shewen mater of to wryte."

With that my hond in his he took anoon,
Of which I comfort caughte, and wente in
faste;

170

But lord! so I was glad and wel begoon!
For over-al, wher that I myn eyen caste,
Were treës clad with leves that ay shal laste,
Eche in his kinde, of colour fresh and grene
As emeraude, that joye was to sene. 175

The bilder ook, and eek the hardy asshe;
The piler elm, the cofre unto careyne; ³
The boxtree piper; holm to whippes lasshe;
The sayling firr; the cipres, deth to
pleyne;

179

The sheter ⁴ ew, the asp for shaftes pleyne;
The olyve of pees, and eek the drunken vyne,
The victor palm, the laurer to devyne.

A garden saw I, ful of blosmy bowes,
Upon a river, in a grene mede,
Ther as that swetnesse evermore y-now is, 185
With floures whyte, blew, yelow, and rede;

And colde welle-stremes, no-thing dede,
That swommen ful of smale fisshes lighte,
With finnes rede and scales silver-brighte.

On every bough the briddes herde I singe, 190
With voys of angel in hir armonye,
Som besyde hem hir briddes ¹ forth to bringe;
The litel conyes ² to hir pley gunne hye,
And further al aboute I gan espye
The dredful roo, the buk, the hert and
hinde, 195
Squerels, and bestes smale of gentil kinde.

Of instruments of strenges in acord
Herde I so pleye a ravissching swetnesse
That god, that maker is of al and lord,
Ne herde never better, as I gesse; 200
Therwith a wind, unnethe hit might be lesse,
Made in the leves grene a noise softe
Acordant to the foules songe on-lofte.

The air of that place so attempre was
That never was grevaunce of hoot ne cold; 205
Ther wex eek every holsom spyce and gras,
Ne no man may ther wexe seek ne old;
Yet was ther joye more a thousand fold
Then man can telle; ne never wolde it nighte,
But ay cleer day to any mannes sighte. 210

Under a tree, besyde a welle, I say ³
Cupyd our lord his arwes forge and fyle;
And at his fete his bowe al redy lay,
And Wil ⁴ his doghter, tempred al the whyle
The hedes in the welle, and with hir wyle 215
She couched hem after as they shulde serve,
Som for to slee, and som to wounde and kerve.

Tho was I war of Plésaunce anon-right,
And of Aray, and Lust, ⁵ and Curtesye;
And of the Craft that can and hath the
might 220

To doon by force a wight to do folye —
Disfigurat was she, I nil not lye;
And by him-self, under an oke, I gesse,
Sawe I Delyt, that stood with Gentilnesse.

I saw Beautee, withouten any atyr, 225
And Youthe, ful of game and Jolyte,
Fool-hardinesse, Flatery, and Desyr,
Messagerye, and Mede, and other three —
Hir names shul noght here be told for me —
And upon pilers grete of jasper longe 230
I saw a temple of bras y-founded stronge.

Aboute the temple daunceden alway
Wommen y-nowe, of whiche somme ther were

1 magnets.
3 Elm wood was used for coffins.

2 whether.
4 shooter.

1 fledglings.
4 desire.

2 rabbits.
5 pleasure.

3 saw.

Faire of hem-self, and somme of hem were
 gay;
 In kirtels, al disshevele,¹ wente they
 there — 235
 That was hir office alwey, yeer by yeer —
 And on the temple, of doves whyte and faire
 Saw I sitinge many a hundred paire.

Before the temple-dore ful soberly
 Dame Pees sat, with a curteyn in hir
 hond: 240
 And hir besyde, wonder discretly,
 Dame Pacience sitting ther I fond
 With face pale, upon an hille of sond;
 And alder-next,² within and eek withoute,
 Behest and Art, and of hir folke a route. 245

Within the temple, of syghes hote as fyr
 I herde a swogh³ that gan aboute renne;
 Which syghes were engendred with desyr,
 That maden every auter for to brenne
 Of newe flaume; and wel aspyed I thenne 250
 That al the cause of sorwes that they drye⁴
 Com of the bitter goddesse Jalousye.

The god Priapus saw I, as I wente,
 Within the temple, in soverayn place stonde,
 In swich aray as whan the asse him shente 255
 With crye by night, and with his ceptre in
 honde;
 Ful besily men gunne assaye and fonde
 Upon his hede to sette, of sondry hewe,
 Garlondes ful of fresshe floures newe.

And in a privee corner, in disporte, 260
 Fond I Venus and hir porter Richesse,
 That was ful noble and hauteyn of hir porte;
 Derk was that place, but afterward lightnesse
 I saw a lyte, unnethe hit might be lesse,
 And on a bed of golde she lay to reste, 265
 Til that the hote sonne gan to weste.
 Hir gilte heres with a golden threde
 Y-bounden were, untressed as she lay,
 And naked for the breste unto the hede
 Men might hir see; and, sothly for to say, 270
 The remenant wel kevered to my pay⁵
 Right with a subtil kerchief of Valence,
 Ther was no thikker cloth of no defence.

The place yaf a thousand savours swote,
 And Bachus, god of wyn, sat hir besyde, 275
 And Ceres next, that doth of hunger bote;⁶
 And, as I seide, amiddes lay Cipryde,
 To whom on knees tho yonge folkes cryde
 To ben hir help; but thus I leet hir lye,
 And fether in the temple I gan espye 280

1 with hair loose.
 4 endure.

2 next of all.
 5 satisfaction.

3 low noise.
 6 remedy.

That, in dispyte of Diane the chaste,
 Ful many a bowe y-broke heng on the wal
 Of maydens, suche as gunne hir tymes waste
 In hir servyse; and peynted over al
 Of many a story, of which I touche shal 285
 A fewe, as of Calixte and Athalaunte,
 And many a mayde, of which the name I
 wante;

Semyramus, Candace, and Ercules,
 Biblis, Dido, Tisbe and Piramus,
 Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles, 290
 Eleyne, Cleopatre, and Troilus,
 Silla, and eek the moder of Romulus —
 Alle these were peynted on that other syde,
 And al hir love, and in what plyte they dyde.

Whan I was come ayen into the place 295
 That I of spak, that was so swote and grene,
 Forth welk I tho, my-selven to solace.
 Tho was I war wher that ther sat a quene
 That, as of light the somer-sonne shene
 Passeth the sterre, right so over mesure 300
 She fairer was than any creature.

And in a launde,¹ upon an hille of floures,
 Was set this noble goddesse Nature;
 Of braunches were hir halles and hir boures,
 Y-wrought after hir craft and hir mesure; 305
 Ne ther nas foul that cometh of engendrure,
 That they ne were prest² in hir presence,
 To take hir doom and yeve hir audience.

For this was on seynt Valentynes day,
 Whan every foul cometh ther to chese his
 make,³ 310
 Of every kinde, that men thenke may;
 And that so huge a noyse gan they make,
 That erthe and see, and tree, and every lake
 So ful was, that unnethe was ther space
 For me to stonde, so ful was al the place. 315

And right as Aleyn, in the Pleynt of Kinde,⁴
 Devyseth Nature of aray and face,
 In swich aray men mighten hir ther finde.
 This noble emperesse, ful of grace,
 Bad every foul to take his owne place, 320
 As they were wont alwey fro yeer to yere,
 Seynt Valentynes day, to stonden there.

That is to sey, the foules of ravyne⁵
 Were hyst set; and than the foules smale,
 That eten as hem nature wolde enclyne, 325
 As worm, or thing of whiche I telle no tale;

1 open space of grass. 2 ready. 3 mate.
 4 Alanus de Insulis was author of a work, *De Planctu*
Nature, from which Chaucer has taken hints for his de-
 scription of the goddess Nature.
 5 birds of prey.

But water-foul sat lowest in the dale;
And foul that liveth by seed sat on the grene,
And that so fele,¹ that wonder was to sene.

Ther mighte men the royal egle finde, 330
That with his sharpe look perceth the sonne;
And other egles of a lower kinde,
Of which that clerkes wel devysen conne.
Ther was the tyraunt with his fethres donne
And greye, I mene the goshawk, that doth
pyne² 335
To briddes for his outrageous ravyne.

The gentil faucon, that with his feet dis-
treyneth
The kinges hond; the hardy sperhawk eke,
The quayles foo; the merlion³ that peyneth
Him-self ful ofte, the lark for to seke; 340
There was the douve, with hir eyen meke;
The jalous swan, ayens his deth that singeth;
The oule eek, that of dethe the bode⁴ bring-
eth;

The crane the geaunt, with his trompes
sounne;
The thef, the chogh; and eek the jangling
pye; 345
The scorning jay; the eles foo, the heroune;
The false lapwing, ful of trecherye;
The stare,⁵ that the counseyl can bewrye;
The tame ruddok; and the coward kyte;
The cok, that orloge is of thorpes⁶ lyte; 350

The sparrow, Venus sone; the nightingale,
That clepeth forth the fresshe leves newe;
The swallow, mordrer of the flyës smale
That maken hony of floures fresshe of hewe;
The wedded turtel, with hir herte trewe; 355
The pecok, with his aungels fethres brighte;
The fesaunt, scorner of the cok by nighte;

The waker goos; the cukkow ever unkinde;
The popinjay, ful of delicasye;
The drake, stroyer of his owne kinde; 360
The stork, the wreker of avouterye;⁷
The hote cormeraunt of glotonye;
The raven wys, the crow with vois of care;
The throstel olde; the frosty feldefare.

What shulde I seyn? of foules every
kinde 365
That in this worlde han fethres and stature,
Men mighten in that place assembled finde
Before the noble goddesse Nature.
And everich of hem did his besy cure

1 many. 2 injury. 3 merlin, small hawk.
4 warning. 5 starling.
6 that time-piece is of little villages.
7 avenger of adultery.

Benignely to chese or for to take, 370
By hir acord, his formel¹ or his make.

But to the poynt — Nature held on hir honde
A formel egle, of shap the gentileste
That ever she among hir werkes fonde,
The most benigne and the goodlieste; 375
In hir was every vertu at his reste,
So ferforth, that Nature hir-self had blisse
To loke on hir, and ofte hir bek to kisse.

Nature, the vicaire of th'almyghty lorde,
That hoot, cold, hevvy, light, and moist and
dreye 380
Hath knit by even noubre of acorde,
In esy vois began to speke and seye,
"Foules, tak hede of my sentence, I preye,
And, for your ese, in furthering of your nede,
As faste as I may speke, I wol me spede. 385

Ye know wel how, seynt Valentynes day,
By my statut and through my governaunce,
Ye come for to chese — and flee your way —
Your makes, as I prik yow with plesaunce.
But natheles, my rightful ordenaunce 390
May I not lette, for al this world to winne,
That he that most is worthy shal beginne.

The tercel egle,² as that ye knowen wel,
The foul royal above yow in degree,
The wyse and worthy, secree, trewe as stel, 395
The which I formed have, as ye may see,
In every part as hit best lyketh me,
Hit nedeth noght his shap yow to devyse,
He shal first chese and speken in his gyse.

And after him, by order shul ye chese, 400
After your kinde, everich as yow lyketh,
And, as your hap is, shul ye winne or lese;
But which of yow that love most entryketh,³
God sende him hir that sorest for him
syketh."

And therwith-al the tercel gan she calle, 405
And seyde, "my sone, the choys is to thee
falle.

But natheles, in this condicioun
Mot be the choys of everich that is here,
That she agree to his eleccioun,
Who-so he be that shulde been hir fere; 410
This is our usage alwey, fro yeer to yere;
And who so may at this time have his grace,
In blisful tyme he com in-to this place."

With hed enclyned and with ful humble chere
This royal tercel spak and taried nought; 415

1 companion. 2 male eagle.
3 ensnareth. 4 companion.

"Unto my sovereyn lady, and noght my
fere,
I chese, and chese with wille and herte and
thought,
The formel on your hond so wel y-wrought,
Whos I am al and ever wol hir serve,
Do what hir list, to do me live or sterve.¹ 420

Beseching hir of mercy and of grace,
As she that is my lady sovereyne;
Or let me dye present in this place.
For certes, long may I not live in peyne;
For in myn herte is corven² every veyne; 425
Having reward³ al only to my trouthe,
My dere herte, have on my wo som routh.

And if that I to hir be founde untrew, e,
Disobeysaunt, or wilful negligent,
Avauntour,⁴ or in proces love a newe, 430
I pray to you this be my jugement,
That with these foules I be al to-rent,
That ilke day that ever she me finde
To hir untrew, or in my gilte unkinde.

And sin that noon loveth hir so wel as I, 435
Al be she never of love me behette,⁵
Than oghte she be myn thorough hir mercy,
For other bond can I noon on hir knette.
For never, for no wo, ne shal I lette
To serven hir, how fer so that she wende; 440
Sey what yow list, my tale is at an ende."

Right as the fresshe, rede rose newe
Ayen the somer-sonne coloured is,
Right so for shame al wexen gan the hewe
Of this formel, whan she herde al this; 445
She neyther answerde wel, ne seyde amis.
So sore abashed was she, til that Nature
Seyde, "doghter, drede yow noght, I yow
assure."

Another tercel egle spak anon
Of lower kinde, and seyde, "that shal not be;
I love hir bet than ye do, by seynt John, 451
Or atte leste I love hir as wel as ye;
And lenger have served hir, in my degree,
And if she shulde have loved for long loving,
To me allone had been the guerdoning. 455

I dar eek seye, if she me finde fals,
Unkinde, jangler,⁶ or rebel any wyse,
Or jalous, do me hongen by the hals!⁷
And but I bere me in hir servyse
As wel as that my wit can me suffyse, 460
For poynt to poynt, hir honour for to save,
Tak she my lyf, and al the good I have."

The thridde tercel egle answerde tho,
"Now, sirs, ye seen the litel leyser here;
For every foul cryeth out to been a-go 465
Forth with his make, or with his lady dere;
And eek Nature hir-self ne wol nought here,
For taryng here, noght half that I wolde
seye;
And but I speke, I mot for sorwe deye.

Of long servyse avaunte¹ I me no-thing, 470
But as possible is me to dye to-day
For wo, as he that hath ben languisshing
Thise twenty winter, and wel happen may
A man may serven bet and more to pay²
In half a yere, al-though hit were no more, 475
Than som man doth that hath served ful
yore.

I ne say not this by me, for I ne can
Do no servyse that may my lady please;
But I dar seyn, I am hir trewest man
As to my dome, and feynest wolde hir ese; 480
At shorte wordes, til that deth me sese,
I wol ben hires, whether I wake or winke,
And trewe in al that herte may bethinke."

Of al my lyf, sin that day I was born,
So gentil plee in love or other thing 485
Ne herde never no man me befor,
Who-so that hadde leyser and cunning
For to reherse hir chere and hir speking;
And from the morwe gan this speche laste
Til downward drow the sonne wonder
faste. 490

The noyse of foules for to ben delivered
So loude rong, "have doon and let us
wende!"

That wel wende I the wode had al to-
shivered.

"Come of!" they cryde, "allas! ye wil us
shende!"³

Whan shal your cursed pleding have an
ende? 495

How shulde a juge eyther party leve,
For yee or nay, with-uten any preve?"

The goos, the cokkow, and the doke also
So cryden "kek, kek!" "kukkow!" "quek,
quek!" hye,

That thorgh myn eres the noyse wente
tho. 500

The goos seyde, "al this nis not worth a
flye!

But I can shape hereof a remedye,
And I wol sey my verdit faire and swythe⁴
For water-foul, who-so be wrooth or blythe."

1 die. 2 cut. 3 regard. 4 boaster.
5 promised. 6 idle talker. 7 neck.

1 boast. 2 satisfaction. 3 injure. 4 quickly

"And I for worm-foul," seyde the fool
 cukkow, 505
 "For I wol, of myn owne auctoritè,
 For comune spede, take the charge now,
 For to delivere us is gret charitè."
 "Ye may abyde a while yet, parde!"
 Seide the turtel, "if hit be your wille 510
 A wight may speke, him were as good be
 stille.

I am a seed-foul, oon the unworthieste,
 That wot I wel, and litel of kunninge;
 But bet is that a wightes tonge reste
 Than entremeten ¹ him of such doinge 515
 Of which he neyther rede can nor singe.
 And who-so doth, ful foule himself acloyeth,²
 For office uncommitted ofte anoyeth."

Nature, which that alway had an ere
 To murmour of the lewednes ³ behinde, 520
 With facound ⁴ voys seide, "hold your tonges
 there!

And I shal sone, I hope, a counseyl finde
 You to delivere, and fro this noyse unbinde;
 I juge, of every folk men shal oon calle
 To seyn the verdit for you foules alle." 525

Assented were to this conclusioun
 The briddes alle; and foules of ravyne
 Han chosen first, by pleyne eleccioun,
 The tercelet of the faucon, to diffyne
 Al hir sentence, and as him list, termyne; 530
 And to Nature him gonnen to presente,
 And she accepteth him with glad entente.

The tercelet seide than in this manere:
 "Ful hard were hit to preve hit by resoun
 Who loveth best this gentil formel here; 535
 For everich hath swich replicacioun,
 That noon by skilles ⁵ may be broght a-down;
 I can not seen that arguments avayle;
 Than semeth hit ther moste be batayle."

"Al redy!" quod these egles tercelles tho. 540
 "Nay, sirs!" quod he, "if that I dorste it seye,
 Ye doon me wrong, my tale is not y-do!
 For sirs, ne taketh noght a-gref, I preye,
 It may noght gon, as ye wolde, in this weye;
 Oure is the voys that han the charge in
 honde, 545
 And to the juges dome ye moten stonde;

And therfor pees! I seye, as to my wit,
 Me wolde thinke how that the worthieste
 Of knighthode, and lengest hath used hit,
 Moste of estat, of blode the gentileste, 550

Were sittingest ¹ for hir, if that hir leste;
 And of these three she wot hir-self, I trowe,
 Which that he be, for hit is light to knowe."

The water-foules han her hedes leyd
 Togeder, and of short avysement, 555
 Whan everich had his large golee ² seyde,
 They seyden sothly, al by oon assent,
 How that "the goos, with hir facounde gent,³
 That so desyreth to pronounce our nede,
 Shal telle our tale," and preyde "god hir
 spede." 560

And for these water-foules tho began
 The goos to speke, and in hir cakelinge
 She seyde, "pees! now tak kepe every man,
 And herkeneth which a reson I shal bringe;
 My wit is sharp, I love no taryinge; 565
 I seye, I rede him, though he were my
 brother,
 But she wol love him, lat him love another!"

"Lo here! a parfit reson of a goos!"
 Quod the sperhawk; ⁴ "never mot she thee!"⁵
 Lo, swich hit is to have a tonge loos! 570
 Now parde, fool, yet were hit bet for thee
 Have holde thy pees, than shewed thy
 nycete!⁶
 Hit lyth not in his wit nor in his wille,
 But sooth is seyde, 'a fool can noght be
 stille.'"

The laughter aroos of gentil foules alle, 575
 And right anon the seed-foul chosen hadde
 The turtel trewe, and gunne hir to hem calle,
 And preyden hir to seye the sothe sadde ⁷
 Of this matere, and asked what she radde; ⁸
 And she answerde, that pleynly hir en-
 tente 580
 She wolde shewe, and sothly what she mente.

"Nay, god forbede a lover shulde chaunge!"
 The turtel seyde, and wex for shame al reed;
 "Thogh that his lady ever-more be straunge,
 Yet let him serve hir ever, til he be deed; ⁸
 For sothe, I preye noght the gooses reed; ⁹
 For thogh she deyed, I wolde non other
 make,¹⁰
 I wol ben hires, til that the deth me take."

"Wel bourded!" ¹¹ quod the doke, "by my
 hat!
 That men shulde alwey loven, causeles, 590
 Who can a reson finde or wit in that?
 Daunceth he mury that is mirtheles?

1 meddle. 2 overburdens. 3 ignorance.
 4 eloquent. 5 reasons.

1 most suitable. 2 mouthful.
 3 well-bred eloquence. 4 sparrow-hawk.
 5 prosper. 6 foolishness. 7 the sober truth.
 8 advised. 9 advice. 10 mate. 11 jested.

Who shulde recche of that is reccheles?
 Ye, quek!" yit quod the doke, ful wel and
 faire,
 "There been mo sterres, god wot, than a
 paire!" 595

"Now fy, cherl!" quod the gentil tercelet,
 "Out of the dunghil com that word ful
 right,
 Thou canst noght see which thing is wel
 be-set:
 Thou farest by love as oules doon by light,
 The day hem blent, ful wel they see by
 night; 600
 Thy kind is of so lowe a wretchednesse,
 That what love is, thou canst nat see ne
 gesse."

Tho gan the cukkow putte him forth in
 prees¹
 For foul that eteth worm, and seide blyve,²
 "So I," quod he, "may have my make in
 pees, 605
 I recche not how longe that ye stryve;
 Lat ech of hem be soley³ al hir lyve,
 This is my reed, sin they may not acorde;
 This shorte lesson nedeth noght recorde."

"Ye! have the glotoun fild ynogh his
 paunche, 610
 Than are we wel!" seyde the merlioun;
 "Thou morderer of the heysugge⁴ on the
 braunche
 That broghte thee forth, thou rewtheless
 glotoun!
 Live thou soley³ worms corrupcioun!
 For no fors is of lakke of thy nature;⁵ 615
 Go, lewed be thou, whyl the world may
 dure!"

"Now pees," quod Nature, "I comaunde
 here;
 For I have herd al your opinioun,
 And in effect yet be we never the nere;⁶
 But fynally, this is my conclusioun, 620
 That she hir-self shal han the eleccioun
 Of whom hir list, who-so be wrooth or blythe,
 Him that she cheest, he shal hir have as
 swythe.⁷

For sith hit may not here discussed be
 Who loveth hir best, as seide the tercelet, 625
 Than wol I doon hir this favour, that she
 Shal have right him on whom hir herte is
 set,

And he hir that his herte hath on hir knet.¹
 This juge I, Nature, for I may not lyë;
 To noon estat I have non other yë. 630

But as for counseyl for to chese a make,
 If hit were reson, certes, than wolde I
 Counseyle yow the royal tercel take,
 As seide the tercelet ful skilfully,
 As for the gentlest and most worthy, 635
 Which I have wroght so wel to my plesaunce;
 That to yow oghte been a suffisaunce."

With dredful² vois the formel hir answerde,
 "My rightful lady, goddesse of Nature,
 Soth is that I am ever under your yerde, 640
 Lyk as is everiche other creature,
 And moot be youre whyl my lyf may dure;
 And therfor graunteth me my firste bone,³
 And myn entente I wol yow sey right sone."

"I graunte it you," quod she; and right
 anon 645
 This formel egle spak in this degree,
 "Almighty quene, unto this yeer be doon
 I aske respit for to avysen me.
 And after that to have my choys al free;
 This al and som, that I wolde speke and
 seye; 650
 Ye gete no more, al-though ye do me deye.

I wol noght serven Venus ne Cupyde
 For sothe as yet, by no manere wey."
 "Now sin it may non other wyse betyde,"
 Quod tho Nature, "here is no more to
 sey; 655
 Than wolde I that these foules were a-wey
 Ech with his make, for taryng lenger
 here" —
 And seyde hem thus, as ye shul after here.

"To you speke I, ye tercelets," quod Nature,
 "Beth of good herte and serveth, alle
 three; 660
 A yeer is not so longe to endure,
 And ech of yow payne him, in his degree,
 For to do wel; for, god wot, quit is she
 Fro yow this yeer; what after so befall,
 This entremes⁴ is dressed for you alle." 665

And whan this werk al broght was to an ende,
 To every foule Nature yaf his make
 By even acorde, and on hir wey they wende.
 A! lord! the blisse and joye that they make!
 For ech of hem gan other in winges take, 670
 And with hir nekkes ech gan other winde,
 Thanking alwey the noble goddesse of kinde.

1 in the crowd.

2 straightway.

3 single.

4 hedge sparrow.

5 It makes no difference if thy race become extinct.

6 nearer.

7 quickly.

1 knitted.

2 timid.

3 boon.

4 intervening course at a dinner.

But first were chosen foules for to singe,
As yeer by yere was alwey hir usaunce
To singe a roundel at hir departinge, 675
To do Nature honour and plesaunce.

The note, I trowe, maked was in Fraunce;
The wordes were swich as ye may heer finde,
The nexte vers, as I now have in minde.

*Qui bien aime a tard oublie.*¹ 680
"Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,
And driven away the longe nightes blake!"

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy onlofte; —
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake — 685

*Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake.*

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make;
Ful blisful may they singen when they the
wake; 690

*Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake
And driven away the longe nightes blake."*

And with the showting, whan hir song was
do,

That foules maden at hir flight a-way, 695
I wook, and other bokes took me to
To rede upon, and yet I rede alway;

I hope y-wis, to rede so som day
That I shal mete som thing for to fare
The bet; and thus to rede I nil not spare. 700

*Explicit tractatus de congregacione Volucrum
die sancti Valentini*

TRUTH

Balade de bon conseil

Flee fro the prees,² and dwelle with sothfast-
nesse,

Suffyce unto thy good,³ though hit be smal;
For hord hath hate, and climbing tikeliness,⁴
Prees hath envye, and wele blent overal;⁵
Savour⁶ no more than thee bihove shal; 5
Werk wel thy-self, that other folk canst rede;
And trouthe shal deliver, hit is no drede.

Tempest⁷ thee noght al croked to redresse,⁸
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal;⁹
Gret reste stant in litel besinesse; 10
And eek be war to sporne ageyn an al;¹⁰

Stryve noght, as doth the crokke with the wal.
Daunte¹ thy-self, that dauntest otheres dede;
And trouthe shal deliver, hit is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,²
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal. 16
Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesne:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of
thy stal!

Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee
lede: 20

And trouthe shal deliver, hit is no drede.

Envoy

Therefore, thou Vache,³ leve thyn old
wrecchednesse

Unto the worlde; leve now to be thral;
Crye him mercy, that of his hy goodnesse
Made thee of noght, and in especial 25

Draw unto him, and pray in general
For thee, and eek for other, hevenlich mede.
And trouthe shal deliver, hit is no drede.

Explicit Le bon counseill de G. Chaucer

GENTILESSE

Moral Balade of Chaucer

The firste stok, fader of gentilesse —
What man that claymeth gentil for to be,
Must folowe his trace, and alle his wittes
dresse

Vertu to sewe,⁴ and vyces for to flee.
For unto vertu longeth dignitee, 5
And noght the revers, saufly dar I deme,
Al were he⁵ mytre, croune, or diademe.

This firste stok was ful of rightwisnesse,
Trewe of his word, sobre, pitous, and free,⁶
Clene of his goste, and loved besinesse, 10
Against the vyce of slouthe, in honestee;
And, but his heir love vertu, as dide he,
He is noght gentil, thogh he riche seme,
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

Vyce may wel be heir to old richesse; 15
But ther may no man, as men may wel see,
Bequethe his heir his vertuous noblesse
That is appropred unto no degree,⁷
But to the firste fader in magestee,
That maketh him his heir, that can him
queme,⁸ 20

Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

¹ This indicates the tune, or "note," which "maked was in Fraunce."

² crowd. ³ be satisfied with your property.
⁴ ticklish uncertainty. ⁵ wealth always blinds.
⁶ relish. ⁷ vex. ⁸ set straight again.
⁹ i.e. Fortune. ¹⁰ kick against an awl.

¹ subdue. ² humility.
³ Sir Philip la Vache, a friend of Chaucer's.
⁴ follow. ⁵ although he wear. ⁶ generous.
⁷ That belongs to no one social class. ⁸ please.

THE COMPLAINT OF CHAUCER TO HIS EMPTY PURSE

To you, my purse, and to non other wight
Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere!
I am so sorry, now that ye be light;
For certes, but ye make me hevy chere,
Me were as leef be leyd un-on my bere;¹ 5
For whiche un-to your mercy thus I crye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now voucheth sauf this day, or hit be night,
That I of you the blisful soun may here,
Or see your colour lyk the sonne bright, 10
That of yelownesse hadde never pere.
Ye be my lyf, ye be myn hertes stere,²
Quene of comfort and of good companye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

1 bier.

2 steersman.

Now purs, that be to me my lyves light, 15
And saveour, as doun in this worlde here,
Out of this toun help me through your
might,

Sin that ye wole nat been my tresorere;
For I am shave as nye¹ as any frere.
But yit I pray un-to your curtesye: 20
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Lenvoy de Chaucer

O conquerour² of Brutes³ Albion!
Which that by lyne and free eleccioun
Ben verray king, this song to you I sende;
And ye, that mowen al our harm amende, 25
Have minde up-on my supplicacioun!

1 close.

2 Henry IV, who became king on Sept. 30, 1399. Four days later Chaucer's pension was doubled.

3 Brutus, a refugee from Troy, was the mythical founder of the realm of Albion (Britain).

JOHN GOWER (died 1408)

Of Gower's life almost nothing is known. He died in 1408, apparently at an advanced age, and was buried in the church of St. Mary Overy (now Southwark Cathedral) near the southern end of London Bridge, where his tomb is still to be seen. He was a gentleman of liberal education and substantial wealth, a generous benefactor of the priory of St. Mary Overy, within whose precincts he spent the later years of his life. We know that he was a personal friend of Chaucer. He was married, apparently for the second time, in 1398.

He wrote voluminously in three different languages — the *Mirour de l'Homme* (about 1377) also known by the Latin title *Speculum Meditantis*, a didactic poem in French, which discusses in nearly 30,000 lines human virtues and vices and the problems of contemporary society; *Vox Clamantis* (about 1381), a Latin poem of over 10,000 lines which deals with similar topics; and *Confessio Amantis* (1390), a poem in English which contains some 34,000 lines. In all his work Gower maintains a high level of literary excellence without ever rising to the heights of great poetry. In *Confessio Amantis*, a lover confesses to a priest of Venus his shortcomings and disappointments in love, the confession following the medieval formula of the Seven Deadly Sins. After each part of the confession, the priest tells for the lover's guidance a series of tales which are intended to illustrate the point in question. The tale of Florent here printed illustrates the virtue of obedience, as opposed to the deadly sin of pride. The same story is told by the Wife of Bath in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The *Confessio Amantis* is really a great collection of stories, gathered by Gower from his wide reading, for which the device of the confession is little more than a literary excuse. The stories are told clearly and entertainingly in graceful octosyllabic verse. As a writer of narrative verse, Gower deserves to rank with William Morris, author of the *Earthly Paradise*.

Gower's complete works in four volumes are edited by G. C. Macaulay (Oxford University Press); there is also a small volume of selections from *Confessio Amantis* by the same editor and publisher.

THE TALE OF FLORENT

(*Confessio Amantis*, bk. I, lines 1407-1861)

Ther was whilom be daies olde
A worthi knyht, and as men tolde
He was nevoeu to temperour
And of his court a courteour:
Wifes he was, Florent he hihte; 5
He was a man that mochel myhte;¹
Of armes he was desirous,
Chivalerous and amorous;

And for the fame of worldes speche,
Strange aventures forto seche, 10
He rod the Marches al aboute.
And fell a time, as he was oute,
Fortune, which may every thred
Tobreke and knette of mannes sped,¹
Schop,² as this knyht rod in a pas,³ 15
That he be strengthe take was,
And to a castell thei him ladde,
Wher that he fewe frendes hadde:

1 who could do great things.

1 break and knit together again of man's prosperity.

2 devised.

3 at a walk.

For so it fell that ilke stounde ¹
 That he hath with a dedly wounde
 Feihtende his oghne hondes ² slain
 Branchus, which to the Capitain
 Was sone and heir, wherof ben wrothe
 The fader and the moder bothe.
 That knyht Branchus was of his hond
 The worthieste of al his lond,
 And fain thei wolden do vengeance
 Upon Florent; bot remembrance
 That thei toke of his worthinesse
 Of knyhtod and of gentillesse,
 And how he stod of cousinage
 To temperour, made hem assuage,
 And dorsten noght slen him for fere:
 In gret desputeisoun thei were
 Among hemself, what was the beste.
 Ther was a lady, the slyheste
 Of alle that men knewe tho,
 So old sche myhte unethes go,³
 And was grantdame unto the dede:⁴
 And sche with that began to rede,
 And seide how sche wol bringe him inne,
 That sche schal him to dethe winne
 Al only of his oghne grant,
 Thurgh strengthe of verray covenant
 Withoute blame of eny wiht.
 Anon sche sende for this kniht,
 And of hire sone sche alleide ⁵
 The deth, and thus to him sche seide:
 "Florent, how so thou be to wyte ⁶
 Of Branchus deth, men schal respite
 As now to take vengeance,
 Be so thou stonde in juggement
 Upon certein condicioun,
 That thou unto a questioun
 Which I schal axe schalt ansuere;
 And over this thou schalt ek swere,
 That if thou of the sothe faile,
 Ther schal non other thing avail,
 That thou ne schalt thi deth receive.
 And for men schal the noght deceive,
 That thou therof myht ben avised,
 Thou schalt have day and tyme assised ⁷
 And leve sauflly forto wende,
 Be so that at thi daies ende
 Thou come ayein with thin avys."

This knyht, which worthi was and wys,
 This lady preith that he may wite,
 And have it under seales write,
 What questioun it scholde be
 For which he schal in that degree
 Stonde of his lif in jeupartie.
 With that sche feigneth compaignie,⁸

And seith: "Florent, on love it hongeth
 Al that to myn axinge longeth:
 What alle wommen most desire
 This wole I axe, and in thempire
 Wher as thou hast most knowleching
 Tak conseil upon this axinge."
 Florent this thing hath undertake,
 The day was set, the time take,
 Under his seal he wrot his oth,
 In such a wise and forth he goth
 Home to his emes ¹ court ayein;
 To whom his aventure plein
 He tolde, of that him is befall.
 And upon that thei weren alle
 The wiseste of the lond asent,²
 Bot natheles of on assent
 Thei myhte noght acorde plat,
 On seide this, an othre that.
 After the disposicioun
 Of naturel complexioun ³
 To som woman it is plesance,
 That to an other is grevance;
 Bot such a thing in special,
 Which to hem alle in general
 Is most plesant, and most desired
 Above alle othre and most conspired,⁴
 Such o thing conne thei noght finde
 Be constellacion ne kinde:
 And thus Florent withoute cure
 Mot stonde upon his aventure,
 And is al schape unto the lere,⁵
 As in defalte of his answe.
 This knyht hath levere forto dye
 Than breke his trowthe and forto lye
 In place ther as he was swore,
 And schapth him gon ayein therfore.
 Whan time cam he tok his leve,
 That lengere wolde he noght beleve,
 And preith his em he be noght wroth,
 For that is a point of his oth,
 He seith, that noman schal him wreke,⁶
 Thogh afterward men hiere speke
 That he par aventure deie.
 And thus he wente forth his weie
 Alone as knyht adventurous,
 And in his thoght was curious
 To wite what was best to do:
 And as he rod al one so,
 And cam nyh ther he wolde be,
 In a forest under a tre
 He syh wher sat a creature,
 A lotly wommannysch figure,
 That forto speke of fleisch and bon
 So foul yit syh he nevere non.
 This knyht behield hir redely,

1 hour.
 3 hardly walk.
 5 alleged.
 7 appointed.
 8 friendliness.

2 with his own hands.
 4 the dead knight.
 6 blame.

1 uncle's.
 3 constitution.
 5 prepared for the loss.

2 sent for.
 4 agreed upon.
 6 avenge.

And as he wolde have passed by,
 Sche cleped him and bad abide;
 And he his horse heved ¹ aside
 Tho torneth, and to hire he rod,
 And there he hoveth ² and abod,
 To wite what she wolde mene.
 And sche began him to bemene,³
 And seide: "Florent be thi name,
 Thou hast on honde such a game,
 That bot thou be the betre avised,
 Thi deth is schapen and devised,
 That al the world ne mai the save,
 Bot if that thou my conseil have."
 Florent, whan he this tale herde,
 Unto this olde wyht answerde
 And of hir conseil he hir preide.
 And sche ayein to him thus seide:
 "Florent, if I for the so schape,
 That thou thurgh me thi deth ascape
 And take worschipe of thi dede,
 What schal I have to my mede?"
 "What thing," quod he, "that thou wolt
 axe."
 "I bidde nevere a betre taxe,"⁴
 Quod sche; "bot ferst, er thou be sped,
 Thou schalt me leve such a wedd,⁵
 That I wol have thi trowthe in honde
 That thou schalt be myn housebonde."
 "Nay," seith Florent, "that may noght
 be."
 "Ryd thanne forth thi wey," quod sche,
 "And if thou go withoute red,
 Thou schalt be sekerliche ⁶ ded."
 Florent behihte ⁷ hire good ynowh
 Of lond, of rente, of park, of plowh,
 Bot al that compteth sche at noght.
 Tho fell this knyht in mochel thought;
 Now goth he forth, now comth ayein,
 He wot noght what is best to sein,
 And thoghte, as he rode to and fro,
 That chese he mot on of the tuo —
 Or forto take hire to his wif
 Or elles forto lese his lif.
 And thanne he caste his advantage,
 That sche was of so gret an age,
 That sche mai live bot a while,
 And thoghte put hire in an ile,⁸
 Wher that noman hire scholde knowe,
 Til sche with deth were overthrowe.
 And thus this yonge lusti knyht
 Unto this olde lothly wiht
 Tho seide: "If that non other chance
 Mai make my deliverance,
 Bot only thilke same speche
 Which, as thou seist, thou schalt me teche, 180

Have hier myn hond, I schal thee wedde."
 And thus his trowthe he leith to wedde.¹
 With that sche frounceth ² up the browe:
 "This covenant I wol allowe,"
 Sche seith: "if eny other thing 185
 Bot that thou hast of my techyng
 Fro deth thi body mai respite,
 I wolt thee of thi trowthe acquite,
 And elles be non other weie.
 Now herkne me what I schal seie. 190
 Whan thou art come into the place,
 Wher now thei maken gret manace
 And upon thi comyng abye,
 Thei wole anon the same tide
 Oppose ³ thee of thin answer. 195
 I wot thou wolt nothing forbere
 Of that thou wenest be thi beste,
 And if thou myht so finde reste,
 Wel is, for thanne is ther nomore.
 And elles this schal be my lore,
 That thou schalt seie, upon this molde ⁴
 That alle wommen lievest wolde
 Be sovereign of mannes love:
 For what womman is so above,
 Sche hath, as who seith, al hire wille; 205
 And elles may sche noght fulfille
 What thing hir were lievest have.
 With this answer thou schalt save
 Thiself, and other wise noght.
 And whan thou hast thin ende wroght, 210
 Come hier ayein, thou schalt me finde,
 And let nothing out of thi minde."
 He goth him forth with hevvy chiere,
 As he that not ⁵ in what manere
 He mai this worldes joie atteigne: 215
 For if he deie, he hath a peine,
 And if he live, he mot him binde
 To such on which of alle kinde
 Of wommen is thunsemlieste:
 Thus wot he noght what is the beste: 220
 Bot be him lief or be him loth,
 Unto the castell forth he goth
 His full answer for to yive,
 Or forto deie or forto live.
 Forth with his conseil cam the lord, 225
 The thinges stoden of record,
 He sende up for the lady sone,
 And forth sche cam, that olde mone.⁶
 In presence of the remenant
 The strengthe of al the covenant 230
 Tho was reherced openly,
 And to Florent sche bad forthi
 That he schal tellen his avis,
 As he that woot what is the pris.
 Florent seith al that evere he couthe, 235
 Bot such word cam ther non to mowthe,

¹ his horse's head.³ communicate to him.⁵ pledge. ⁶ certainly.² stays⁴ I ask no better promise.⁷ promised. ⁸ island.¹ gives as a pledge.⁴ earth.² wrinkles.⁵ knows not.³ interrogate.⁶ companion.

That he for yifte or for beheste
 Mihte eny wise his deth areste.¹
 And thus he tarieth longe and late,
 Til that this lady bad algate ²
 That he schal for the dom final
 Yive his answeire in special
 Of that sche hadde him first opposed:
 And thanne he hath trewly supposed
 That he him may of nothing yelp,³
 Bot if so be tho wordes helpe
 Whiche as the womman hath him tawht;
 Wherof he hath an hope cawht
 That he schal ben excused so,
 And tolde out plein his wille tho.
 And whan that this matrone herde
 The manere how this knyht ansuerde,
 Sche seide: "Ha treson, wo thee be,
 That hast thus told the privity ⁴
 Which alle wommen most desire!
 I wolde that thou were afire."
 Bot natheles in such a plit
 Florent of his answeire is quit.
 And tho began his sorwe newe,
 For he mot gon, or ben untrew,
 To hire which his trowthe hadde.
 Bot he, which alle schame dradde,
 Goth forth in stede of his penance,
 And takth the fortune of his chance,
 As he that was with trowthe affaired.⁵

This olde wyht him hath awaited
 In place wher as he hire lefte:
 Florent his wofull heved ⁶ uplefte
 And syh this vecke⁷ wher sche sat,
 Which was the lothlieste what ⁸
 That evere man caste on his yhe:
 Hire nase bass,⁹ hire browes hyhe,
 Hire yhen smale and depe set,
 Hire chekes ben with teres wet,
 And rivelen ¹⁰ as an emty skyn
 Hangende down unto the chin;
 Hire lippes schrunken ben for age,
 Ther was no grace in the visage,
 Hir front was nargh,¹¹ hir lockes hore,
 Sche loketh forth as doth a More,¹²
 Hire necke is schort, hir schuldres courbe,¹³
 That myhte a mannes lust destourbe,
 Hire body gret and nothing smal,
 And schortly to describe hire al,
 Sche hath no lith ¹⁴ withoute a lak;
 Bot lich unto the wollesak
 Sche proferth hire unto this knyht,
 And bad him, as he hath behyht,
 So as sche hath ben his warant,
 That he hire holde covenant,

And be the bridel sche him seseth.
 Bot Godd wot how that sche him pleseth
 Of suche wordes as sche spekth:
 Him thenkth welnyh his herte brekth
 For sorwe that he may noght fle,
 Bot if he wolde untrew be.

Loke, how a sek man for his hele
 Takth baldemoine with canele,¹
 And with the mirre takth the sucre,
 Ryht upon such a maner lucre ²
 Stant Florent, as in this diete:
 He drinkth the bitre with the swete,
 He medleth sorwe with likynge,
 And liveth, as who seith,³ deyinge;
 His youthe schal be cast aweie
 Upon such on which as the weie ⁴
 Is old and lothly overal.
 Bot nede he mot that nede schal:⁵
 He wolde algate his trowthe holde,
 As every knyht therto is holde,⁶
 What happ so evere him is befalle:
 Thogh sche be the fouleste of alle,
 Yet to thonour of wommanhiede
 Him thoghte he scholde taken hiede;
 So that for pure gentillesse,
 As he hire couthe best adresee,
 In ragges, as sche was totore,⁷
 He set hire on his hors tofore
 And forth he takth his weie softe;
 No wonder thogh he siketh ⁸ ofte.
 Bot as an oule ⁹ fleth be nyhte
 Out of alle othre briddes syhte,
 Riht so this knyht on daies brode
 In clos him hield, and schop his rode
 On nyhtes time, til the tyde
 That he cam there he wolde abide;
 And prively withoute noise
 He bringth this foule grete coise ¹⁰
 To his castell in such a wise
 That noman myhte hire schappe avise,
 Til sche into the chambre cam:
 Wher he his prive conseil nam ¹¹
 Of suche men as he most troste,
 And tolde hem that he nedes moste
 This beste wedde to his wif,
 For elles hadde he lost his lif.

The prive wommen were asent,¹²
 That scholden ben of his assent:
 Hire ragges thei anon of drawe,
 And, as it was that time lawe,
 She hadde bath, sche hadde reste,
 And was arraied to the beste.
 Bot with no craft of combes brode
 Thei myhte hire hore lockes schode,¹³

1 stop. 2 in any case. 3 boast.
 4 secret. 5 prepared. 6 head.
 7 hag. 8 thing. 9 flat.
 10 shrivel. 11 Her forehead was narrow.
 12 Moor. 13 bent. 14 limb.

1 gentian with cinnamon. 2 compensation.
 3 so to speak. 4 highway.
 5 But he must, whom fate compels. 6 bound.
 7 all torn. 8 sighs. 9 owl. 10 hag.
 11 took. 12 sent for. 13 divide, untangle.

- And sche ne wolde noght be schore ¹ 345 Sche put hire hand, and be his leve
For no conseil, and thei therfore,
With such atyr as tho was used,
Ordeinen that it was excused,
And hid so crafteliche aboute,
That noman myhte sen hem oute. 350 Or elles upon daies lyht,
Bot when sche was fulliche arraied
And hire atyr was al assaied,
Tho was sche foulere on to se:
Bot yit it may non other be, 355 Devisе himself which was the beste.
Thei were wedded in the nyht;
So wo begon was nevere knyht
As he was thanne of mariage.
And sche began to pleie and rage,
As who seith, I am wel ynowh;
Bot he therof nothing ne lowh,² 360 Sey what you list in my querele,
For sche tok thanne chiere on honde ³
And clepeth him hire housebonde,
And seith, "My lord, go we to bedde,
For I to that entente wedde,
That thou schalt be my worldes blisse:" 365 Which is the beste unto my chois.
And profreth him with that to kisse,
As sche a lusti lady were.
His body myhte wel be there,
Bot as of thought and of memoire
His herte was in purgatoire. 370
Bot yit for strengthe of matrimoine
He myhte make non essoine,⁴
That he ne mot algates plie ⁵
To gon to bedde of compaignie:
And whan thei were abedde naked,
Withoute slep he was awaked;
He torneth on that other side,
For that he wolde hise yhen hyde
Fro lokynge on that foule wyht. 375
The chambre was al full of lyht,
The courtins were of cendal ⁶ thinne;
This newe bryd which lay withinne,
Thogh it be noght with his acord,
In armes sche beclipte hire lord,
And preide, as he was torned fro, 385
He wolde him torne ayeinward tho;
"For now," sche seith, "we ben both on."
And he lay still as eny ston,
Bot evere in on ⁷ sche spak and preide,
And bad him denke on that he seide,
Whan that he tok hire be the hond. 390
He herde and understod the bond,
How he was set to his penance,
And as it were a man in trance
He torneth him al sodeinly,
And syh a lady lay him by 395
Of eyhtetiene ⁸ wynter age,
Which was the faireste of visage
That evere in al this world he syh:
And as he wolde have take hire nyh, 400
- Sche put hire hand, and be his leve
Besoghte him that he wolde leve,
And seith that for to wynne or lese
He mot on of tuo thinges chese,
Wher ¹ he wol have hire such on nyht, 405
Or elles upon daies lyht,
For he schal noght have bothe tuo.
And he began to sorwe tho,
In many a wise and caste his thoght,
Bot for al that yit cowthe he noght 410
Devisе himself which was the beste.
And sche, that wolde his hertes reste,
Preith that he sholde chese algate,²
Til ate laste longe and late
He seide: "O ye, my lyves hele,³ 415
Sey what you list in my querele,
I not what ansuere I shal yive:
Bot evere whil that I may live,
I wol that ye be my maistresse,
For I can noght miselve gesse 420
Which is the beste unto my chois.
Thus grante I yow myn hole voie,
Ches for ous bothen, I yow preie;
And what as evere that ye seie,
Riht as ye wole so wol I." 425
"Mi lord," sche seide, "grant merci,⁴
For of this word that ye now sein,
That ye have mad me sovereign,
Mi destine is overpassed,
That never hierafter schal be lassed ⁵ 430
Mi beaute, which that I now have,
Til I be take into my grave;
Bot nyht and day as I am now
I schal alwey be such to yow.
The kinges dowhter of Cizile ⁶ 435
I am, and fell bot siththe awhile,⁷
As I was with my fader late,
That my stepmoder for an hate,
Which toward me sche hath begonne,
Forschop ⁸ me, til I hadde wonne 440
The love and sovereignete
Of what knyht that in his degre
Alle othre passeth of good name:
And, as men sein, ye ben the same,
The dede proeveth it is so; 445
Thus am I youre evermo."
Tho was plesance and joye ynowh,
Echon with other pleide and lowh;
Thei live longe and wel thei ferde,
And clerkes that this chance herde 450
Thei writen it in evidence,
To teche how that obedience
Mai wel fortune a man to love
And sette him in his lust above,
As it befell unto this knyht, 455

¹ shorn. ² laughed. ³ began to be merry. ⁴ excuse.
⁵ submit. ⁶ silk. ⁷ continually. ⁸ eighteen.

¹ whether. ² at any rate. ³ health of my life.
⁴ thank you. ⁵ lessened ⁶ Sicily.
⁷ but a short time since. ⁸ transformed.

In the British Museum is preserved a manuscript known as Cotton Nero A. X + 4, which contains four poems copied out by one scribe, and written in the English spoken in the latter part of the fourteenth century in the West Midland district. These poems are generally believed to be the work of one poet, as to whose identity we have not even a plausible guess. But he is a very good poet. Had this single manuscript perished, we should never have known the greatest of Chaucer's contemporaries in English poetry; for two of the poems in the manuscript — *Pearl*, a hauntingly beautiful dream-vision, in which a father sees again in the lovely fields outside the walls of the New Jerusalem the dear daughter whom he had lost, and the romance of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* — are among the noblest poems of the English Middle Ages. Unluckily the West Midland dialect of these poems makes them so difficult to read that most modern readers must be content to know them only in translation.

þis kyng lay at Camylot vpon kryst-masse,
 With mony luthly lorde, ledez of þe best,
 Rekenly of þe rounde table alle þo rich breþer,
 With rych reuel oryzt, & rechles mepes;
 þer tournayed tulkcs by-tymez ful mony,
 Justed ful Jolile þyse gentyle knyhtes,
 Syþen kayred to þe court, caroles to make.
 For þer þe fest watȝ ilyche ful fiften dayes
 With alle þe mete & þe mirþe þat men coupe a-vyse;
 Such glaumande gleȝ glorious to here,
 Dere dyn vp-on day, daunsyng on nyȝtes,
 Al watȝ hap upon heȝe in halleȝ & chambrez,
 With lordez & ladies, as leuest him þoȝt;
 With alle þe wele of þe worlde þay woned þer samen,
 þe most kyd knyȝtes vnder krystes seluen,
 & þe louelokkest ladies þat euer lif haden,
 & he þe comlokest kyng þat þe court haldes;
 For al watȝ þis fayre folk in her first age,
 on stille;
 þe hapnest vnder heuen,
 Kyng hyȝest mon of wylle,
 Hit were now gret nye to neuen
 So hardy a here on hille.

Where the nameless poet found the story which he has retold so beautifully, we do not know; but we can recognize in the poem a skilful combination of two originally separate stories which are found in many varying versions — the story of the challenge which is the principal matter of the first and fourth “fyttes,” and the story of the temptation which fills “Fytte the Third.” (For versions of these stories, see G. L. Kittredge: *A Study of Gawain and the Green Knight*, Harvard University Press, 1916.)

The poem is an admirable example of medieval romance. The scene is laid at the court of King Arthur, which was already in the long-ago for fourteenth-century readers, a world of magic and marvelous adventure. Sir Gawain is a noble pattern of chivalric virtues — loyalty, courtesy, honor. His one small lapse but serves to make him more credibly human. Unlike many of the old romances, the poem has unity of theme and a nearly faultless narrative form.

The best edition of the poem is that of Tolkien and Gordon (Oxford University Press, 1925). It has been several times translated into modern English. The translation here printed is by Neilson and Webster in *Chief British Poets of the 14th and 15th Centuries* (Houghton Mifflin), where the student may also find a translation of the *Pearl*.

FYTTE THE FIRST

1. After the siege and the assault had ceased at Troy, the city been destroyed and burned to brands and ashes, the warrior who

wrought there the trains of treason was tried
for his treachery, the truest on earth.¹ This
was Aeneas the noble; he and his high kindred
afterwards conquered provinces, and became
5 patrons of well nigh all the wealth in the

1 Antenor and Aeneas were the traitors who in the medieval story of Troy handed over the city to the Greeks.

West Isles. As soon as rich Romulus turns him to Rome, with great pride he at once builds that city, and names it with his own name, which it now has; Ticius turns to Tuscany and founds dwellings; Longobard raises homes in Lombardy; and, far over the French flood, Felix Brutus establishes Britain joyfully on many broad banks, where war and waste and wonders by turns have since dwelt, and many a swift interchange of bliss and woe.

2. And when this Britain was founded by this great hero, bold men loving strife bred therein, and many a time they wrought destruction. More strange things have happened in this land since these days than in any other that I know; but of all the British kings that built here, Arthur was ever the most courteous, as I have heard tell. Therefore, I mean to tell of an adventure in the world, which some count strange and extraordinary even among the wonders of Arthur. If ye will listen to this lay but a little while, I will tell it forthright as I heard it told in town, as it is set down in story that cannot be changed, long written in the land in true words.

3. This King lay royally at Camelot at Christmas tide with many fine lords, the best of men, all the rich brethren of the Round Table, with right rich revel and careless mirth. There full many heroes tourneyed betimes, jousted full gaily; then returned these gentle knights to the court to make carols.¹ For there the feast was held full fifteen days alike with all the meat and the mirth that men could devise. Such a merry tumult, glorious to hear; joyful din by day, dancing at night. All was high joy in halls and chambers with lords and ladies as pleased them best. With all the weal in the world they dwelt there together, the most famous knights save only Christ, the loveliest ladies that ever had life, and he, the comeliest of kings, who holds the court. For all this fair company were in their prime in the hall, the happiest troop under heaven with the proudest of kings. Truly it would be hard to name anywhere so brave a band.

4. When New Year was fresh and but newly come, the court was served double on the dais. As soon as the king with his knights was come into the hall, the chanting in the chapel came to an end; loud was the cry there of clerks and others. Noel was celebrated anew, shouted full often; and afterwards the great ones ran about to take

handsel;² called aloud for New Year's gifts, paid them out briskly, busily discussed the gifts; ladies laughed full loud, though they had lost; and he that won was not wroth, that may ye well trow. All this mirth they made till the meat time. When they had washed, worthily they went to their seats, the best man ever above, as it best behoved. Queen Guinevere full beauteous was set in the midst, placed on the rich dais adorned all about. Fine silk at the sides, a canopy over her of precious cloth of Toulouse, and tapestries of Tars,² that were embroidered and set with the best gems that money could buy. Truly no man could say that he ever beheld a comelier lady than she, with her dancing gray eyes.

5. But Arthur would not eat till all were served. He was so merry in his mirth, and somewhat childlike in his manner; his life pleased him well; he loved little either to lie long or to sit long, so busied him his young blood and his wild brain. And another custom moved him also, that he through chivalry had taken up; he would never eat upon such a dear day before he was told an uncouth tale of some adventurous thing, of some great marvel that he could believe, of ancient heroes, of arms, or of other adventures; or unless some person demanded of him a sure knight to join with him in jousting, to incur peril, to risk life against life, trusting each in the other, leaving the victory to fortune. This was the king's custom whenever he held court at each goodly feast among his free company in the hall. And so with undaunted face he strides stoutly to his seat on that New Year, making great mirth with everybody.

6. Thus the great king stands waiting before the high table, talking of trifles full courteously. The good Gawain was placed there beside Guinevere, and Agravain of the Hard Hand sat on the other side, both of them the king's sister's sons and full sure knights. Bishop Baldwin at the top begins the table, and Ywain, Urien's son, ate by himself. These were placed on the dais and honorably served, and after them many a good man at the side tables. Then the first course came in with blare of trumpets, which were hung with many a bright banner. A new noise of kettle-drums with the noble pipes, wild and stirring melodies awakened the echoes; that many a heart heaved full high at their tones. Dainties of precious meats

¹ New Year's gifts of good omen.

² Oriental figured stuff.

¹ dancing and singing in a ring.

followed, foison of fresh viands, and on so many dishes that it was difficult to find place before the people to set on the cloth the silver that held the several courses. Each man as he himself preferred partook without hesitation. Every two ¹ had twelve dishes between them, good beer and bright wine both.

7. Now will I tell you no more of their service, for everybody must well understand that there was no lack of opportunity for the people to take their food. Another noise full new suddenly drew nigh, for scarcely had the music ceased a moment, and the first course been properly served in the court, than there burst in at the hall door an awesome being, in height one of the tallest men in the world; from the neck to the waist so square and so thick was he, and his loins and his limbs so long and so great, that half giant I believed him to have been, or, at any rate, the largest of men, and withal the handsomest in spite of his bulk, that ever rode; for though his back and breast were so vast, yet his belly and waist were properly slim; and all his form according, full fairly shaped. At the hue of his noble face men wondered; he carried himself in hostile fashion and was entirely green.

8. All green was this man and his clothing; a straight coat sat tight to his sides; a fair mantle above, adorned within; the lining showed, with costly trimming of shining white fur; and such his hood also, that was caught back from his locks and lay on his shoulders, the hem well stretched; hose of the same green, that clung to his calf; and clean spurs under, of bright gold upon silk bands richly barred, and shoes on his shanks as the hero rides. And all his vesture verily was clean verdure, both the bars of his belt, and the other beauteous stones that were set in fine array about himself and his saddle, worked on silk. It would be too difficult to tell the half of the trifles that were embroidered there, with birds and flies, with gay gauds of green, — the gold ever in the middle; the pendants of the poitrel, the proud crupper, the bits, — and all the metal was enamelled; the stirrups that he stood on were coloured the same, and his saddle bow likewise, and his fine reins that glimmered and glinted all of green stones. The horse that he rode on was of the same colour too, a green horse, great and thick, a steed full stiff to guide, in gay embroidered bridle, and one right dear to his master.

¹ It was extremely sumptuous having only two at a mess; i.e. only two sharing the same cup and platter.

9. This hero was splendidly dressed in green; and the hair of his head matched that of his horse; fair flowing locks enfolded his shoulders; a beard as big as a bush hung over his breast; and it, together with his splendid hair that reached from his head, was trimmed evenly all round above his elbows, so that half his arms were caught thereunder in the manner of a king's hood, that covers his neck. The mane of that great horse was much like it, very curly and combed, with knots full many folded in with gold wire about the fair green, — always one knot of the hair, another of gold. The tail and the forelock were twined in the same way, and both bound with a band of bright green, set with full precious stones the whole length of the dock, and then tied up with a thong in a tight knot; where rang many bells full bright of burnished gold. Such a steed in the world, such a hero as rides him, was never beheld in that hall before that time. His glances were like bright lightning, so said all that saw him. It seemed as if no man could endure under his blows.

10. He had neither helm nor hauberk, nor gorget, armour nor breastplate, nor shaft nor shield to guard or to smite; but in his one hand he had a holly twig, that is greenest when groves are bare, and an axe in his other, a huge and prodigious one, a weapon merciless almost beyond description; the head had the vast length of an ell-yard, the blade all of green steel and of beaten gold; the bit brightly burnished, with a broad edge, as well shaped for cutting as sharp razors. The stern warrior gripped it by the steel of its stout staff, which was wound with iron to the end of the wood and all engraven with green in beauteous work. A lace was lapped about it, that was fastened at the head, and tied up often along the helve, with many precious tassels attached on rich embroidered buttons of the bright green. This hero turns him in and enters the hall, riding straight to the high dais, fearless of mischief. He greeted never a one, but looked loftily about, and the first word that he uttered was: "Where is the governor of this company? Gladly I would see that hero and speak with him."

He cast his eye on the knights and rode fiercely up and down, stopped and gan ponder who was there the most renowned.

11. All gazed fixedly on the man, for everybody marvelled what it might mean, that a knight and a horse could have such a colour: as green grown as the grass, and

greener, it seemed; shining brighter than green enamel on gold. All were amazed who stood there, and stalked nearer to him, with all the wonder in the world what he would do; for many marvels had they seen, but such never before. Therefore for phantom and faery the folk there deemed it; and for that reason many a noble warrior was slow to answer, and all were astonished at his voice and sat stone still in a deep silence through the rich hall. Their voices sank as though they had suddenly fallen asleep. I deem, however, that it was not all for fear, but somewhat for courtesy. But now let him to whom all defer undertake the wight.

12. Then Arthur before the high dais beheld that adventure, and saluted the stranger properly, for never was he afraid, and said, "Sir, welcome indeed to this place. I am called Arthur, the head of this hostel. Light courteously down and tarry, I pray thee; and whatso thy will is we shall wit after."

"Nay, so help me he that sits on high," quoth the hero. "To dwell any time in this house was not my errand; but because the fame of this people is lifted up so high, and thy town and thy men are held the best, the stoutest in steel gear on steeds to ride, the wightest and the worthiest of the world's kind, and proved opponents in other proper sports; and here courtesy is known, as I have heard tell, — it is this that has enticed me hither certainly at this time. You may be sure by this branch that I bear here that I pass in peace and seek no quarrel; for if I had set out with a company in fighting fashion, I have a hauberk at home and a helm both, a shield and a sharp spear shining bright, and other weapons to wield, I ween well also; but since I wished no war, my weeds are softer. Now if thou be as bold as all men tell, thou wilt grant me graciously the game that I ask."

Arthur knew how to answer, and said: "Sir courteous knight, if it is battle that thou cravest, thou shalt not fail of a fight here."

13. "Nay, I demand no fight; in faith I tell thee there are but beardless children about on this bench. If I were hasped in arms on a high steed there is no man here to match me, their might is so weak. Therefore I crave in this court a Christmas game, for it is Yule and New Year, and here are many gallants. If there be a man in this house who holds himself so hardy, is so bold in his blood, so rash in his head, that he dares stiffly strike one stroke for another, I shall give him as my gift this rich gisarm, this

axe, that is heavy enough, to handle as he likes; and I shall abide the first blow as bare as I sit. If any warrior be wight enough to try what I propose, let him leap lightly to me and take this weapon — I quit-claim it forever, let him keep it as his own — and I shall stand him a stroke firmly on this floor. At another time, by our Lady, thou wilt grant me the boon of dealing him another blow; I will give him respite of a twelvemonth and a day. Now hie, and let us see quickly if any herein dare say aught."

14. If he had astonished them at first, stiller were then all the retainers in hall, the high and the low. The warrior on his steed settled himself in his saddle, and fiercely his red eyes he reeled about; bent his thick brows, shining green; and waved his beard, awaiting whoso would rise. When none would answer him he coughed aloud, stretched himself haughtily and began to speak; "What! Is this Arthur's house," said the hero then, "that is famous through so many realms? Where is now your pride and your conquests, your fierceness, and your wrath and your great words? Now is the revel and the renown of the Round Table overcome by the word of a single man; for all tremble for dread without a blow shown."

With this he laughed so loud that the lord grieved; the blood shot for shame into his fair face. He waxed as wroth as the wind; and so did all that were there. The king so keen of mood then stood near that proud man.

15. "Sir," said he, "by heaven thy asking is foolish; and as thou hast demanded folly, it behooves thee to find it. I know no man that is aghast of thy great words. Give me now thy gisarm, for God's sake, and I will grant thy boon that thou hast bidden."

Quickly he leaped to him and caught at his hand; and the other alights fiercely on foot. Now Arthur has his axe, and grips the helve; he whirls it sternly about as if he meant to strike with it. The bold stranger stood upright before him, higher than any in the house by a head and more; with stern cheer he stood there, stroked his beard, and with cool countenance drew down his coat, no more afraid or dismayed for Arthur's great strokes than if some one had brought him a drink of wine upon the bench.

Gawain, that sat by the queen, turned to the king: "I beseech now with all courtesy that this affair might be mine."

16. "Would ye, worthy lord," quoth Gawain to the king, "bid me step from this

bench and stand by you there, — that I without rudeness might leave this table, and that my liege lady liked it not ill — I would come to your help before your rich court; for methinks it is obviously unseemly that such an asking is made so much of in your hall, even though ye yourself be willing to take it upon you, while so many bold ones sit about you on the bench; than whom, I ween, none under heaven are higher of spirit, nor more mighty on the field where strife is reared. I am the weakest, I know, and feeblest of wit; and to tell the truth there would be the least loss in my life. I am only to praise forasmuch as ye are my uncle; no other nobility than your blood know I in my body. And since this adventure is so foolish, it belongs not to you; I have asked it of you first; give it to me. Let this great court decide if I have not spoken well."

The heroes took counsel together and they all gave the same advice, — to free the crowned king and give the game to Gawain.

17. Then the king commanded Gawain to rise from the table; and he right quickly stood up and made himself ready, kneeled down before the king and took the weapon; and Arthur lovingly left it to him, lifted up his hand and gave him God's blessing, and gladly bade him be hardy both of heart and of hand. "Take care, cousin," quoth the king, "that thou give him a cut; and if thou handle him properly, I readily believe that thou shalt endure the blow which he shall give after."

Gawain goes to the man with gisarm in hand; and he boldly awaits him, shrinking never a whit. Then speaks to Sir Gawain the knight in the green; "Rehearse we our agreement before we go farther. First I conjure thee, hero, how thou art called, that thou tell me it truly, so that I may believe it."

"In good faith," quoth the knight, "Gawain am I called, who give you this buffet, whatever befalls after; and at this time twelvemonth I am to take from thee another with whatever weapon thou wilt, and from no wight else alive."

The other answers again, "Sir Gawain, so thrive I as I am heartily glad that thou shalt give this blow."

18. "By Gog," quoth the green knight, "Sir Gawain, it delights me that I am to get at thy fist what I have requested here; and thou hast readily and truly rehearsed the whole of the covenant that I asked of the king, save that thou shalt assure me, sir, by

thy troth, that thou wilt seek me thyself wheresoever thou thinkest I may be found upon the earth, and fetch for thyself such wages as thou dealest me to-day before this rich company."

"Where should I seek thee?" quoth Gawain. "Where is thy place? I know never where thou livest, by him that wrought me; nor do I know thee, knight, thy court, nor thy name. But tell me truly the way and how thou art called, and I will use all my wit to win my way thither, — and that I swear thee, for a sooth, and by my sure troth."

"New Year will suffice for that; no more is needed now," quoth the man in green to Gawain the courteous. "To tell the truth, after I have received thy tap, and thou hast smitten me well, I shall promptly inform thee of my house and my home and mine own name. Then thou mayest inquire about my journey and hold promise; and if I speak no speech, then thou speedest the better, for thou mayest linger at ease in thy land and seek no further. Take now thy grim tool to thee and let us see how thou knockest."

"Gladly, sir, for sooth," quoth Gawain as he strokes his axe.

19. The green knight on the ground prepared himself properly. With the head a little bowed he disclosed the flesh. His long, lovely locks he laid over his crown, and let the naked nape of his neck show for the blow. Gawain gripped his axe and gathered it on high; the left foot he set before on the ground, and let the axe light smartly down on the naked flesh, so that the sharp edge severed the giant's bones, and shrank through the clear flesh and sheared it in twain, till the edge of the brown steel bit into the ground. The fair head fell from the neck to the earth, and many pushed it with their feet where it rolled forth. The blood burst from the body and glistened on the green. Yet never faltered nor fell the hero for all that; but stoutly he started up with firm steps, and fiercely he rushed forth where the heroes stood, caught his lovely head, and lifted it up straightway. Then he turned to his steed, seized the bridle, stepped into the steel bow and strode aloft, holding the head in his hand by the hair; and as soberly the man sat in his saddle as if no mishap had ailed him, though he was headless on the spot. He turned his trunk about — that ugly body that bled. Many a one of them thought that he had lost his reason.

20. For he held the head straight up in his hand; turned the face toward the highest on the dais; and it lifted up the eyelids and

looked straight out, and spoke thus much with its mouth, as ye may now hear:—"Look Gawain, that thou be ready to go as thou hast promised, and seek loyally, hero, till thou find me; as thou hast promised in this hall in the hearing of these knights. To the green chapel go thou, I charge thee, to receive such a blow as thou hast dealt. Thou deservest to be promptly paid on New Year's morn. As the knight of the green chapel many men know me; therefore, if thou strivest to find me, thou shalt never fail. And so come, or it behooves thee to be called recreant."

With a wild rush he turned the reins, and flew out at the hall door—his head in his hand—so that the fire of the flint flew from the foal's hoofs. To what country he vanished knew none there; no more than they wist whence he was come. The king and Gawain roared with laughter at that green man; but this adventure was reckoned a marvel among men.

21. Though the courteous king wondered in his heart, he let no semblance be seen, but said aloud to the comely queen with courteous speech, "Dear dame, to-day be never dismayed; well becoming are such tricks at Christmas, in lack of entertainment, to laugh and sing about among these pleasant carols of knights and ladies. Nevertheless I may well go to my meat, for I can not deny that I have seen a marvel." He glanced at Sir Gawain and said cheerfully, "Now, sir, hang up thine axe; it has hewn enough." And it was put above the dais to hang on the tapestry where all men might marvel at it, and by it avouch the wonderful happening. Then they turned to the board, these heroes together—the king and the good knight—and the keen men served them double of all dainties, as was most fitting; with all manner of meat, and minstrelsy both. They spent that day in joy until it came to an end. Now take care, Sir Gawain, that thou blench not for the pain to prosecute this adventure that thou hast taken on hand.

FYTTE THE SECOND

1. This hanel of adventures had Arthur at the beginning, in the young year, since he yearned to hear boasting. Although there was little news when they went to their seats, now they are provided with stern work, their hands quite full. Gawain was glad to begin those games in the hall; but it would not be surprising if the end were heavy; for though

men be merry in mind when they have much drink, yet a year runs full swiftly, and yields never the same; the beginning full seldom matches the end. And so this Yule went by, and the year after it, each season in turn following the other. After Christmas came the crabbed Lent, that tries the flesh with fish and more simple food. But then the weather of the world quarrels with winter, and though the cold still clings, the clouds lift; copiously descends the rain in warm showers, and falls upon the fair earth. Flowers show there; green are the garments both of fields and of groves; birds hurry to build, and lustily they sing for the solace of the soft summer, that follows thereafter. Blossoms swell into bloom in rows rich and rank; and lovely notes are heard in the beauteous wood.

2. After the season of summer with the soft winds, when Zephyrus blows on seeds and herbs, happy is the plant that waxes then, when the dank dew drops from the leaves, to await the blissful glance of the bright sun. But then harvest hastens and hardens it soon: warns it to wax full ripe against the winter. He drives with drought the dust to rise,—from the face of the earth to fly full high. The wild wind of the welkin wrestles with the sun. The leaves fall from the bough and light on the ground. The grass becomes all gray that erst was green. Then all ripens and rots that which formerly flourished; and thus runs the year in yester-days many; and winter returns again without asking any man, till the Michelmas moon has come in wintry wise. Then thinks Gawain full soon of his anxious voyage.

3. Yet till Allhallows day with Arthur he lingers; and Arthur made a feast on that festival for the hero's sake, with great and gay revel of the Round Table. Knights full courteous and comely ladies all for love of that man were in sorrow; but nevertheless they spoke only of mirth; and many a joyless one there made jests for his gentle sake. After meat he mournfully addresses his uncle, and speaks of his passage, and openly he says—"Now, liege lord of my life, leave I ask of you. Ye know the cost of this case; I do not care to tell you even a trifle of its dangers; but I am ready to start for the fray no later than to-morrow morn, to seek the man in the green, as God will guide me."

Then the best of the castle gathered together, Ywain and Erec, and others full many, Sir Dodinel de Sauvage, the Duke of Clarence, Lancelot and Lyonel and Lucan the Good, Sir Bors and Sir Bedever, big men

both, and many other proud ones, with Mador de la Port. All this company of the court came nearer to the king, to counsel the knight, with care at their hearts. There was much deep grief felt in the hall that so worthy a one as Gawain should go on that errand, to endure a sorry dint and deal none himself with his brand. But the knight ever made good cheer, and said, "Why should I swerve from stern and strange destiny? What can a man do but try?"

4. He lingered there all that day, and on the morn made ready. Early he asked for his arms, and they were all brought. First a carpet of Toulouse was stretched over the floor, and much was the gilt gear that gleamed upon it. The brave man stepped thereon and handled the steel, clad in a doublet of costly Tars, and afterwards a well wrought hood, closed on top and bound within with a glistening white fur. Then they put the sabatons¹ upon the hero's feet, lapped his legs in steel with fair greaves, to which were attached well polished poyeones² fastened about his knees with knots of gold. Fine cuisses then, that well enclosed his thick, brawny thighs, they attached with thongs. Next the decorated burnie³ of bright steel rings upon precious stuff encased the hero, and well burnished braces upon his two arms, with elbow-pieces goodly and gay and gloves of plate, and all the goodly gear that might avail him at that time, with rich coat armour, gold spurs well fastened, and a sure brand girt about his side by a silken sash.

5. When he was hasped in arms his harness was rich; the least latchet or loop gleamed with gold. So, harnessed as he was, he heard his mass, offered and adored at the high altar. Then he came to the king and his court; courteously took his leave of lords and ladies; and they kissed him, and convoyed him, entrusting him to Christ. By that time was Gringolet ready, and girt with a saddle that gleamed full gaily with many gold fringes; everywhere nailed anew, prepared for that emergency. The bridle, barred about, was bound with bright gold; the decoration of the breastplate and of the fine housings, the crupper and caparison, accorded with the saddle-bow, and all was adorned with rich red gold nails, that glittered and gleamed like the gleam of the sun. Then he took the helm and quickly kissed it. It was stoutly stapled and stuffed within; it was high on his head, hasped behind, with a light urison⁴ over the

ventail,¹ embroidered and bound with the best gems on a broad silken border; and birds on the seams like painted popinjays² preening themselves here and there; turtle-doves and true-loves³ thickly interlaced. As many birds there were as had been in town for seven winters. The circlet that surrounded his crown was even more precious — a device of gleaming diamonds.

6. Then they showed him the shield, that was of sheer gules, with the pentangle painted in pure gold. He took it by the baldric and cast it about his neck; and it became the hero passing fair. And why the pentangle pertains to that noble prince I mean to tell you, though it should delay me. It is a sign that Solomon set formerly as a token of truth, by its own right, for it is a figure that holds five points, and each line overlaps and locks in another; and throughout it is endless; and the English call it everywhere, as I hear, the endless knot. Therefore it suits this knight and his clear arms, forever faithful in five things, and in each of them five ways. Gawain was known for good and as refined gold, devoid of every villainy, adorned with virtues. Therefore, the new pentangle he bore on shield and coat, as the man most true of speech and the knight gentlest of behaviour.

7. First, he was found faultless in his five wits; and again the hero failed never in his five fingers; and all his affiance in this world was in the five wounds that Christ received on the cross, as the creed tells; and where-soever this man was hard bestead in the mêlée his pious thought was in this above all other things — to take all his strength from the five joys that the courteous Queen of Heaven had of her child. For this cause the knight had her image comely painted in the greater half of his shield, that when he looked down thereupon, his courage never abated. The fifth five that I find that the hero used, were generosity and fellowship above all things, his purity and his courtesy that never swerved, and pity that passes all qualities. These very five were more surely set upon that warrior than upon any other. Now all these⁴ were established fivefold in this knight, and each one was fastened in another that had no end, and they were fastened on five points that never failed, nor met anywhere, nor sundered either, but finished always without end at each corner, wherever the game began or concluded.

1 steel shoes.
3 coat of mail.

2 knee pieces.
4 scarf.

1 visor.
4 these five larger virtues.

3 true lover's knots.

Therefore on his fair shield this knot was painted royally with red gold upon red gules. That is the true pentangle as the people properly call it. Now was the gay Gawain armed. He caught up his lance right there, and with a good-day he went for evermore.

8. He spurred his steed with the spurs and sprang on his way so swiftly that the stone struck out fire after him. All who saw the gentle man sighed in heart, and the heroes said all together to each other in their love for that comely knight, "By Christ, it is a shame that thou, hero, must be lost, who art so noble of life. In faith it is not easy to find his match upon the earth. To have acted more warily would have been better counsel; and to have made yon dear one a duke; it would well become him to be a brilliant leader of people here. This would have been better than to have him utterly destroyed, given over to an elvish man for mere boasting pride. Who ever knew any king to take such counsel as to suffer knights to be so tricked for a Christmas game." Much warm water welled from eyes when that seemly sire departed from the dwellings that day. He made no stop, but wightly went his way; many a tiresome path he rode, as I heard the book tell.

9. Now rides this hero, Sir Gawain, through the realm of Logres in God's behalf, though to him it seemed no play. Oft alone companionless he lodged at night in places where he found not before him the fare that he liked. No company had he but his foal by friths and downs, nor nobody but God to talk with by the way; till that he approached nigh unto North Wales. He kept all the isles of Anglesey on the left side, and fared over the fords by the forelands, over at the Holy Head, till he again took land in the wilderness of Wirrel. There dwelt but few that loved either God or man with good heart. And ever as he fared he asked of men that he met if they had heard any talk of a green knight of the green chapel in any spot thereabout, and all nicked him with nay, that never in their life saw they any man of such green hue. The knight took strange roads by many a rough bank. His cheer changed full oft ere he saw that chapel.

10. Many a cliff he overclimbed in strange countries; far sundered from his friends, lonely he rode. At each ford or water where the hero passed it were strange if he found not a foe before him, and that so foul and so fell that it behooved him to fight. So many marvels in the mountains there the man

found that it were too tedious to tell of the tenth part. Sometimes he warred with serpents, and with wolves also, sometimes with savages that dwelt in the cliffs; both with bulls and bears, and boars sometimes, and giants that assailed him from the high fell. Had he not been doughty and stern, and served God, doubtless he had been dead and slain full oft. But the warfare tried him not so much but that the winter was worse, when the cold clear water shed from the clouds, and froze ere it might fall to the barren earth. Near slain with the sleet he slept in his iron more nights than enough on naked rocks, where clattering from the crest the cold burn ran, and hung high over his head in hard icicles. Thus in peril and pain and plights full hard through the country wanders this knight all alone till Christmas Eve. At that tide to Mary he made his moan that she might direct his riding and lead him to some dwelling.

11. Merrily on the morn he rides by a mount into a forest full deep, that was strangely wild. High hills were on each side, and woods beneath of hoar oaks full huge, a hundred together. The hazel and the hawthorn were twined all together, covered everywhere with rough ragged moss, with many unblithe birds upon bare twigs that piteously piped there for pain of the cold. The knight upon Gringolet rides all alone under the boughs, through many a moss and mire, mourning for his trials, lest he should never survive to see the service of that Sire who on that very night was born of a lady to quell our pain. And therefore sighing he said: "I beseech thee, Lord, and Mary, that is mildest mother so dear, for some harbour where I might properly hear mass and thy matins to-morrow. Meekly I ask it, and thereto earnestly I pray my pater and ave and creed." He rode in his prayer and lamented for his misdeeds. Oft-times he blessed himself, and said, "Christ's cross speed me."

12. The hero had not crossed himself more than thrice ere he was aware in the wood of a dwelling on a hill, above a clearing, on a mount, hidden under the boughs of many a huge tree about the ditches; a castle the comeliest that ever knight owned, set on a prairie, a park all about, with its beautiful palace, pinnaced full thick, and surrounded with many a tree for more than two miles. The hero gazed at the castle on that one side as it shimmered and shone through the fair oaks. Then he humbly doffed his helm and

devoutly he thanked Jesus and St. Julian — who are both gentle — who courteously had directed him and harkened to his cry. "Now bon hostel," quoth the man, "I beseech you yet!" Then he spurs Gringolet with his gilt heels, and he full fortunately takes the way to the chief road, that soon brought the hero to the bridge-end in haste. The bridge was securely lifted, the gates locked fast; the walls were well arrayed; no wind blast did it fear.

13. The hero that sat on his horse, abode on the bank of the deep double ditch that stretched to the place. The wall sank in the water wondrous deep, and again a full huge height it towered aloft, of hard hewn stone up to the top courses, corbelled under the battlement in the best manner; and above fine watch-towers ranged along, with many good loop-holes that showed full clean. A better barban that hero never looked upon. And farther within he beheld the high hall, with towers set full thickly about, and fair and wondrous high filioles with carved tops cunningly devised. Chalk-white chimneys 25 enough he saw that gleamed full white on the battlements. So many painted pinnacles were set everywhere, built so thick among the crenellations of the castle, that it verily appeared cut out of paper. Fair enough it seemed to the noble knight on his horse if he could only attain the shelter within, to harbour in that hostel, while the holiday lasted. He called, and soon there appeared on the wall a right pleasant porter who took his message and greeted the knight errant.

14. "Good sir," quoth Gawain, "would you go my errand to the high lord of this house to crave harbour?"

"Yea, by Peter," quoth the porter; "and truly I trow that ye are welcome, sir, to dwell while you like."

Then the man went again quickly, and a crowd of folk with him, to receive the knight. They let down the great draw and eagerly poured out, and kneeled down on their knees upon the cold earth to welcome the hero as it seemed to them proper. They opened up wide the broad gate for him and he raised them courteously, and rode over the bridge. Several attendants held his saddle while he alighted, and afterwards good men enough stabled his steed. Then knights and squires came down to bring this hero joyfully into the hall. When he lifted up his helm people enough hurried to take it at his hand, in order to serve the courteous one; his sword and his shield they took too. Then he

greeted full courteously the knights each one; and many a proud man pressed there to honour that prince. All hasped in his high weeds, they led him to the hall, where a fair fire burned fiercely upon the hearth. Then the lord of the people came from his chamber to meet courteously the man on the floor. He said, "Ye are welcome to wield as you like what is here; all is your own to have at your will and commandment." "Gracious," quoth Gawain. "Christ reward you for it." Like glad heroes either folded the other in his arms.

15. Gawain looked on the man who greeted him so goodly, and thought it a bold hero that owned the castle, a huge warrior for the nonce, and of great age. Broad and bright was his beard, and all beaver-hued. Firm-gaited was he on his stalwart limbs; with a face as fierce as fire, and a free speech; and to the hero he seemed well suited indeed to govern a nation of good people.

The lord turned to a chamber and promptly commanded to give Gawain a retinue to serve him in lowly wise; and there were ready at his bidding men enough, who brought him to a bright bower where the bedding was curtains of pure silk with clear gold hems, and covertures right curious with comely borders, adorned above with bright fur. Curtains running on ropes, red gold rings, tapestries of Toulouse and Tars hung on the wall, and under foot on the floor of the same pattern. There with mirthful speeches the hero was despoiled of his burnie and of his bright weeds. Quickly men brought him rich robes that he might pick and choose the best for his change. As soon as he took one and was wrapped therein, that sat upon him seemly with sailing skirts, the hero by his visage verily seemed to well nigh every man in looks glowing and lovely in all his limbs; it seemed to them that Christ never made a comelier knight. Wherever in the world he were, it seemed as if he might be a prince without peer in the field where fell men fight.

16. A chair before the chimney, where charcoal burned, was prepared for Sir Gawain richly with cloth and cushions, upon counterpanes that were both fine. And then a beauteous mantle was cast on the man, of a brown fabric richly embroidered, and fairly furred within with the best skins, all of ermine; the hood of the same. And he sat on that settle in seemly rich attire, and warmed him thoroughly; and then his cheer mended. Soon a table was raised up on

trestles full fair, and set with a clean cloth that showed clear white, napkins, salt-cellar, and silver spoons. The hero washed when he would and went to his meat. Men served him seemly enough, — double fold as was proper — with pottages various and suitable, seasoned in the best manner; and many kinds of fish, some baked in bread, some broiled on the coals, some boiled, some in sauces savoured with spices; and always discourse so pleasant that it pleased the warrior. Full freely and often the hero called it a feast right courteously, when all the retainers together praised him as courteous. "Do this penance now, and soon things will be better!" Right mirthful was he for the wine that went to his head.

17. Then they questioned and inquired sparingly in skilful queries put to the prince himself, till he courteously acknowledged that he was of the court which noble Arthur holds alone, who is the rich, royal king of the Round Table; and that it was Gawain himself that sits in the house, by chance come for that Christmas. When the lord had learned that he had that hero, he laughed aloud, so dear it seemed to him; and all the men in the castle made much joy at appearing promptly in the presence of him who contains in his own person all worth and prowess and gracious traits, and is ever praised; above all the men in the world his renown is the greatest. Each warrior said full softly to his companion — "Now shall we see courteous turns of behaviour, and the blameless forms of noble talking; what profit there is in speech may we learn without asking since we have taken that fine father of nurture. God has indeed given us his grace, who grants us to have such a guest as Gawain, on account of whose birth men sit and sing for joy. This hero will now teach us what distinguished manners are; I think that those who hear him will learn how to make love."

18. When the dinner was done and the dear ones risen, the time was nigh arrived at the night. Chaplains took their way to the chapels, and rang full loudly, as they should, to the melodious evensong of the high time. The lord turns thither, and the lady also. Into a comely closet daintily she enters. Gawain joyfully proceeds, and goes thither straightway. The lord takes him by the mantle and leads him to his seat, recognizes him openly and calls him by his name, and says he is the welcomest wight in the world. And Gawain thanked him thoroughly and either embraced the other, and they sat so-

berly together during the service. Then the lady desired to look on the knight, and came from her closet with many fair maidens. But she was fairer than all the others in flesh and face, in skin and form, in complexion and demeanour — more beautiful than Guinevere, it seemed to the hero. He walked through the chancel to greet that gracious one. Another lady led her by the left hand, that was older than she; an ancient lady it seemed, and one highly honoured by the knights about her; but unlike to look on were the ladies, for if the younger was fair, yellow was the other. Rich red on the one bloomed everywhere; rough wrinkled cheeks rolled on the other. The kerchiefs of the one brodered with many clear pearls, openly displayed her breast and her bright throat, which shone clearer than snow that falls on the hills. The other covered her neck with a gorget, that wrapped her black chin in milk-white pleats. Her forehead was completely enveloped in silken folds, adorned and tricked with small ornaments; and naught was bare of that lady but the black brows, the two eyes, the nose, and the naked lips; and those were ugly to behold and oddly bleared. A gracious lady in the land one might call her forsooth! Her body was short and thick, her hips round and broad. More pleasant to look on was the being she led.

19. When Gawain looked on that beautiful one who gazed graciously, he took leave of the lord, and went toward them. The elder he saluted, bowing full low; the lovelier he took a little in his arms; he kissed her comely, and knightly he greeted her. They welcomed him, and he quickly asked to be their servant if it pleased them. They took him between them and led him conversing to the fireplace in the parlour; and straightway they called for spices, which men speeded to bring them unsparingly, and the pleasant wine therewith each time. The lord leaped merrily up full often, and saw to it that the mirth never faltered. Gaily he snatched off his hood and hung it on a spear, and exhorted them to win it as a prize — he to have it who could make the most mirth that Christmas tide. "And I shall try, by my faith, with the help of my friends to compete with the best, ere I lose my apparel." Thus with laughing mien the lord makes merry in order to glad Sir Gawain with games in the hall that night. When it came time, the king commanded lights; Sir Gawain took his leave and went to his bed.

20. On the morn when as every man knows

God was born to die for us, joy waxes in every dwelling in the world for his sake. So it did there on that day, with many dainties at meats and meals, right quaint dishes, and brave men on the dais dressed in their best. The old ancient wife sits the highest, the courteous lord placed by her, as I trow; Gawain and the gay lady together join in the middle, as the courses properly come; and afterwards the rest throughout all the hall, as it seemed best to them, each man in his degree was properly served. There was meat, there was mirth, there was much joy, that it were arduous for me to tell thereof, though to note it I took pains belike. But yet I know that Gawain and the lovely lady took comfort in each other's company, in the choice play of their sharp wits, and the pure courtesy of their modest talk; their disport surpassed indeed that of any royal game. Trumps and drums came playing loudly; each man minded his own business, and they two minded theirs.

21. Much delight was taken there that day, and the second; and the third followed as pleasantly. The joy of St. John's day was gentle to hear of; and it was the last of the festival, the people considered. There were guests to go upon the grey morn; therefore wondrous late they sat up and drank the wine, danced full gayly with sweet carols. At the last, when it was late, they took their leave, each good man to wend on his way. Gawain gave his host good day; but the good man takes him, and leads him to his own chamber, by the fireplace; and there he draws him aside and properly thanks him for the great worship that he had granted him in honouring his house on that high tide, in embellishing his castle with his good cheer. "Indeed, sir, while I live I shall be the better that Gawain has been my guest at God's own feast."

"Gramercy, sir," quoth Gawain, "in good faith the merit is yours; all the honour is your own, — the high King reward you; and I am your man to work your behest in high and in low as I am bound by right."

The lord eagerly strives to hold the knight longer; but Gawain answers him that he can in no wise.

22. Then the hero asked of him full fairly what extraordinary deed had driven him at that dear time from the king's court, to go all alone so boldly, ere the holidays were wholly over.

"For sooth, sir," quoth the hero, "ye say but the truth; a high errand and a hasty had

me from these dwellings; for I am summoned to such a place as I know not in the world whitherward to wend to find it. I would not for all the land in Logres fail to reach it on New Year's morn — so our Lord help me. Therefore, sir, this request I require of you here, that ye tell me truly if ever ye heard tale of the green chapel, where in the world it stands, and of the knight green in colour that keeps it. There was established by statute an agreement between us that I should meet that man at that landmark if I could but survive. And of that same New Year there now lacks but little, and by God's Son I would gladly look on that person — if God would let me — than wield any possession in the world. Therefore, indeed — by your good will — it behooves me to wend; I have now at my disposal barely three days; and I were as fain fall dead as fail of mine errand."

Then laughing quoth the lord, "Now it behooves thee to stay; for I shall direct you to that spot by the time's end — the green chapel upon the ground. Grieve you no more; for ye shall be in your bed, sir, at thine ease some days yet, and set out on the first of the year and come to that place at mid-morn, to do what you like. Stay till New Year's day; and rise and go then. One shall set you on your way; it is not two miles hence."

23. Then was Gawain full glad, and merrily he laughed; "Now I thank you especially for this above all other things; now that my quest is achieved, I shall dwell at your will, and do whatever else ye decide."

Then the sire seized him and set him beside him, and let the ladies be fetched to please them the better. Fair entertainment they had quietly among themselves; the lord in his jovial, friendly demeanor behaved as a man out of his wits that knew not what he did. Then he spake to the knight, crying loud, "Ye have agreed to do the deed that I bid. Will ye hold this hest here at once?"

"Yea, sir, forsooth," said the true hero, "while I stay in your castle I shall be obedient to your hest."

"Since ye have travelled from afar," quoth the warrior, "and then have sat late with me, ye are not well nourished, I know, either with sustenance or with sleep. Ye shall linger in your loft and lie at your ease tomorrow till mass time; and go to meat when ye will with my wife, who shall sit with you and comfort you with her company till I return home; and

I shall rise early and go hunting." Gawain grants all this, bowing courteously.

24. "Yet further," quoth the hero, "let us make an agreement. Whatsoever I win in the wood, it shall be yours; and whatsoever fortune ye achieve, exchange with me therefor. Sweet sir, swap we so, swear truly, whichever one of us gets the worse or the better."

"By God," quoth Gawain the good, "I consent thereto; and whatever game you like, agreeable it seems to me."

"On this beverage just brought the bargain is made," said the lord of that people; and both laughed.

Then they drank and played and amused themselves, these lords and ladies, so long as it pleased them; and then with polite demeanour and many fair gestures, they stood up and lingered a while, and talked quietly, kissed full comely, and took their leave. With many a gay servant and gleaming torches each hero was brought to his bed full softly at the last. Yet before they went to bed they oft rehearsed the covenants. The old lord of that people knew well how to keep up a jest.

FYTTTE THE THIRD

1. Full early before the day the folk arose; the guests that would go called their grooms, and these hastened to saddle the horses, arrange their gear, and truss their mails. The great ones arrayed themselves to ride, leaped up lightly and caught their bridles, each wight on his way where it well pleased him.

The dear lord of the land was not the last; arrayed for the riding, with retainers full many, he ate a sop¹ hastily after he had heard mass, and took his way quickly with his bugle to the field. By the time that any daylight gleamed upon earth, he with his heroes were mounted on their high horses. Then these hunters that understood it, coupled their hounds, unclosed the kennel doors and called them thereout, blew blithely on bugles three simple calls. At this the brachets² bayed and made a wild noise, and the hunters chastised and turned back those that wandered off, — a hundred hunters of the best there were, as I have heard tell. To their stations the trackers went; hunters cast off the couples; and then arose for the good blasts great uproar in that forest.

2. At the first noise of the quest the game

quaked; the deer moved down into the dale, dazed for dread; hurried to the height; but quickly they were hindered by the beaters, who cried stoutly. They let the harts with the high heads go their way, the wild bucks also with their broad palms,¹ for the generous lord had forbidden that there should any man meddle with the male deer in the close season. But the hinds were held back with "Hay!" and "Ho!" and the does driven with great din to the deep glades. There might one see as they ran the flight of arrows; at each turn under the boughs out flew a shaft, that savagely bit on the brown hide with full broad heads. How they leaped and bled and died by the banks! And ever the hounds with a rush eagerly followed them; hunters with shrill horn hastened after with such a resounding cry as if cliffs had cracked. What game escaped the men who shot was all run down and torn at the stands. The deer were pestered at the heights, and worried at the waters; the people were so alert at the low stations, and the greyhounds so great, that got them quickly and pulled them down as fast as a man could see. The lord, shouting for joy, shot and alighted full oft, and passed the day thus with joy till the dark night.

3. So this lord sports by the eaves of the linden wood, and Gawain the good man lies in his gay bed; reposes till the day light gleams on the walls, under the beautiful coverlets, curtained about. And as he fell into a doze, faintly he heard a little din at the door, then distinctly; and he heaved up his head out of the clothes, caught up a corner of his curtain a little, and watched warily in that direction to see what it might be. It was the lady, loveliest to behold, who drew the door to after her right slyly and quietly, and turned toward the bed. The hero grew bashful and laid himself down cunningly and pretended that he slept. And she stepped quietly, and stole to his bed, cast up the curtain, and crept within, and seated herself full softly on the bedside, and stayed there surprisingly long, to see when he should awake. The man lay pretending a full great while, bothered in his conscience what this affair might mean or amount to. Marvellous it seemed to him. But yet he said to himself, "More seemly would it be to find out by asking what she would." Then he waked, and stretched, and turned to her; unlocked his eyelids, and made believe he was amazed, and crossed himself with his hand, to be the safer for his prayer. With chin and cheek

¹ The flat, broad part of the horn.

¹ took a light repast.
² hounds that hunt by scent.

full sweet, of mingled white and red, right lovely she looked, with her small laughing lips.

4. "Good morrow, Sir Gawain!" said that fair lady. "Ye are a careless sleeper when one can enter thus. Now ye are certainly taken; unless we can make a truce I shall bind you in your bed, ye may be sure of that!" All laughing the lady shot those jests.

"Good morrow, fair one," quoth Gawain the blithe. "I shall be at your disposal, and that pleases me well, for I yield me outright and pray for grace,—and that is the best course, I judge, for I am in straits." And thus he returned the jests with many a blithe laugh. "But would ye, lovely lady, grant me leave, free your prisoner and bid him rise, I would leave this bed and dress myself better. Then I could talk with you in more comfort."

"Nay, forsooth, fair sir," said that sweet one, "ye shall not rise from your bed; I shall manage you better. I shall tie you up securely, and afterwards talk with my knight that I have caught; for I ween well, ye are indeed Sir Gawain, whom all the world worships whereso ye ride. Your honour, your courtesy, is heartily praised, by lords, by ladies, by all alive; and now ye are here, forsooth, and we all alone. My lord and his people are gone far away; the other men in their beds, and my maidens also; the door shut and closed with a strong hasp; and since I have in this house him whom all like, I shall make good use of my time while it lasts. Ye are welcome to my person, to do whatever you wish; I am perforce, and must remain, your servant."

5. "In good faith," quoth Gawain, "a great privilege it seems to me — though I be not now he that ye speak of. To reach such reverence as ye rehearse here, I am a man unworthy, I know well. By God, I should be glad — if it seemed good to you — to do what I might in speech or in service to enhance your worship; — it were a pure joy."

"In good faith, Sir Gawain," quoth the gay lady, "if I should speak ill of the fame and the prowess that pleases all others, or esteem it light, it would show but small discernment. But there are ladies enough who were liefer have this courteous one in their power — as I have thee here, — to dally dearly with your dainty words, to comfort themselves and dispel their cares, — than much of the treasure and gold that they have. But I praise the Lord who rules the skies that

through his grace I have wholly in my hand that which all desire."

Great cheer she that was so fair of face made him; the knight with discreet speeches answered her every proposal.

6. "Madame," quoth the merry man, "Mary reward you, for in good faith I have found your generosity noble. People judge a person's deeds largely from the accounts of others; but the praise that they accord my deserts is but idle. It is simply your own nobility, who know nothing but good."

"By Mary," quoth the gracious one, "methinks it is otherwise; for were I worth all the store of women alive, and all the wealth of the world were in my hands, and I should bargain and choose to get me a lord, then for the good traits that I have found in the knight here, of beauty and graciousness and gay seeming, and from what I have heard before and hold in this case to be true, there should no hero in the world be chosen before you."

"Indeed, worthy one," quoth the hero, "ye might have chosen much better; but I am proud of the estimation that ye put upon me; and as your devoted servant I hold you my sovereign, and your knight I become; and Christ pay you for it."

Thus they spoke of various things till past the midmorn; and ever the lady behaved as if she loved him much. But the hero fared with caution and made courteous pretences. "Though I were the fairest of women," mused the lady, "little love would he show, because of the danger that he seeks without reproach — the blow that may slay him, but must needs be undergone." The lady then asked leave, and he granted her full soon.

7. Then she gave him good day, and of a sudden laughed; and as she stood there she astonished him with right sharp words: "Now may he that speeds each speech, pay you for this entertainment; but that ye are Gawain, it goes not in my mind."

"Wherefore?" quoth the hero; and eagerly he asks, afraid lest he had failed in the performance of his design. But the lady blessed him and spake in this wise: "A man as good as Gawain is properly held — and courtesy is closed so entirely in him — could not easily have lingered so long with a lady but he had on some trifling excuse or other courteously craved a kiss."

Then said Gawain, "Indeed, be it as you like; I shall kiss at your commandment as becomes a knight, and fear lest he displease

you; so urge that plea no more." She comes nearer at that and takes him in her arms; stoops graciously down and kisses the man. They courteously entrust each other to Christ. She goes forth at the door without more ado, and he prepares to rise, and hurries amain; calls to his chamberlain, chooses his weeds, steps forth blithely to mass when he is ready; and then he goes to his meat, behaving always courteously, and makes merry all day till the bright moon rises. Never was a hero fairer entertained by two such worthy dames, the older and the younger. Much disport they make together.

8. And ever the lord of the land is bound on his sport, to hunt in holts and heath at barren hinds. Such a sum of does and of other deer he slew there by the time the sun was low, that it were a marvel to estimate. Then eagerly they all flocked together at the last; and quickly of the slain deer they made a quarry. The leaders hastened thereto with men enough; gathered the greatest of grease,¹ and proceeded properly to undo² them as the occasion demands. Some that were there tried them at the assay³ and found two fingers of fat on the leanest of all. Afterwards they slit the slot,⁴ seized the arber,⁵ cut it free with a sharp knife, and tied it up. Next they cut down along the four limbs and rent off the hide; then they opened the belly, took out the paunch, cutting eagerly, and laid aside the knot.⁶ They began at the throat again and skilfully divided the weasand from the windpipe and threw out the guts. Then they cut out the shoulders with their sharp knives, and pulled them through by a little hole, so as to have whole sides. Next they divided the breast, and cut it in two; and once more they began at the throat, split the beast quickly right up to the crotch, took out the advancers,⁷ and immediately severed all the fillets by the ribs, and took them off properly along the backbone even to the haunch, — all of which hung together. Then they heaved it up whole and cut it off there; and that they took for the numbles,⁸ as it is rightly called. At the fork of the thighs they cut the flaps behind; hastily they hewed the carcass in two, and severed it along the backbone.

1 The correct hunting term for "the fattest."

2 cut up.

3 Probably at the side of the neck, or on the brisket.

4 Probably at the hollow of the breast bone.

5 The gullet probably.

6 i.e. the entrails, with the gullet knotted to prevent the filth from escaping.

7 This titbit is sometimes called a part of the numbles.

8 A choice cut; hence, capriciously, our humble-pie.

9. Both the head and the neck they hewed off then, and afterwards they sundered the sides swiftly from the chine, and the corbie's fee¹ they cast in a green tree. Then they pierced either thick side through by the rib, and hung them each by the hocks of the haunches — each man for his fee, as it befell him to have it. Upon a skin of a fair beast they fed their hounds with the liver and the lights, the leather of the paunches, and bread bathed in blood mingled thereamong. Loudly they blew the prize, and bayed their hounds; then they started to carry home their meat, blowing full stoutly many loud notes. By the time daylight was done the band had all arrived at the comely castle, where the knight is quietly waiting in comfort beside a bright fire. When the lord arrived and Gawain met him, there was joy enough.

10. Then the lord commanded to gather in the hall all the household, and both the ladies to come down with their maids. Before all the folk on the floor he bade men fetch his venison before him; and all in merry sport he called Gawain, told him the number of the choice beasts, and showed him the fat meat cut from the ribs; "How like you this play? Have I won the prize? Have I properly earned thanks by my woodcraft?"

"Yes, indeed," quoth the other hero; "here is the fairest store that I saw this seven year in the season of winter."

"And all I give you, Gawain," quoth the host, then; "for by our plighted covenant you can claim it as your own."

"That is true," replied the hero, "and I say to you the same; I too have won this worthy thing within doors; and I am sure that with quite as good will it belongs to you." He throws his arms about his fair neck and kisses him as courteously as he knew how. "Take you there my merchandise; I have won no more; though I should give it up willingly even if it were greater."

"It is good," quoth the good man; "grace mercy therefor. Perchance it might be better if you would tell me where you won this same favour by your own wit."

"That was not the agreement," said he; "ask me no more, for ye have got all that belongs to you, be sure of that."

They laughed and made merry in low tones; then they went quickly to supper with new dainties enough.

11. And afterwards as they sat by a fire-place in a chamber, servants poured to them

1 A bit of the offal for the crows.

oft the choice wine; and again in their jesting they agreed to make the same bargain on the morning that they made before, — whatsoever chance betide to exchange their winnings at night when they met; whatsoever new they win. They made this agreement before all the court, and the beverage was brought forth merrily at that time.¹ Then at length they politely took leave; and everybody hurried to bed. When the cock had crowed and cackled but thrice, the lord had leaped from his bed; likewise his followers each one, so that the meat and the mass were promptly despatched, and the troop ready for the chase in the wood ere any day sprang. With hunters and horns they passed through the plains, and uncoupled the racing hounds among the thorns.

12. Soon they heard the cry of the dogs by a marsh side. The huntsman encouraged the hounds that first caught the scent, hurled sharp words at them with a great noise. The hounds that heard it hastened thither quickly, and fell immediately to the scent, forty at once. Then there rose such a resounding cry of gathered hounds that the rocks about rang. The hunters cheered them with horn and with mouth; then all together they swung in a troop between a pool in that wood and a wild crag. On a hill, beside a cliff at the side of the bog, where the rough rock was rudely fallen, they fared to the finding, and the hunters after them. The men surrounded both the rock and the hill, because they knew well that he was within them, — the beast that the bloodhounds were proclaiming there. Then they beat on the bushes and bade him rise up, and he savagely rushed out athwart the men, the most formidable of swine. Long since had he left the herd on account of his age, for he was a huge beast, the greatest of boars. His grinders when he grunted grieved many, for at his first burst he thrust three to the earth, and sped hastily forth at great speed without respite. And they hallooed "High!" full loudly, and cried "Hay, hay!" With horns to mouth lustily they blew the recheat.² Many were the merry cries of men and of hounds that hastened after this boar with hue and cry to kill him. Full oft he bides at bay, and maims the pack in the mêlée. He hurts many of the hounds and grievously théy howl and yell.

13. The hunters pushed forward then to shoot at him, aimed at him with their arrows and hit him often. But the shafts that

struck on his shields,¹ give way at the pith, and the barbs would not bite on his brawn though the shaven shafts shivered in pieces; the head hopped out again wheresoever it hit. But when the dints of their keen strokes scared him, then mad for destruction he rushed on the men, did them sore hurt where he hurled forth, and many a one grew wary thereat and gave back a little. But the lord on a light horse hurries after him, blowing his bugle like a bold hero. He winds the recheat as he rides through thick groves, following this wild swine till the sun declined. Thus they drive on the day with such doings while our lovely hero lies comfortably in his bed at home in clothes full rich of hue. The lady did not forget; she came to greet him; full early she was by him to change his mind.

14. She comes to the curtain and peeps at the knight. Sir Gawain at once welcomes her worthily, and she returns his greeting right promptly, seats herself softly by his side, laughs openly, and with a lovely look addresses these words to him: "Sir, if ye be Gawain, it seems to me a very strange thing that a man of such quality should not follow the conventions of good society; and should after making acquaintance with a person cast him utterly from his mind. Thou hast already forgotten what I taught you yesterday in the best language that I knew."

"What is that?" quoth the hero. "Forsooth I know not. If what ye say be true, I am to blame."

"Yet I taught you about kissing," replied the fair lady; "wherever a countenance is known, quickly to claim a kiss; that becomes every knight who practices courtesy."

"Cease such speech, my dear lady," said the ready man. "I durst not claim it lest I should be denied. If I proposed and were refused, I should certainly be wrong in proferring."

"By my faith," quoth the lovely dame, "ye cannot be refused. Ye are strong enough to compel it by strength if ye pleased, supposing any were so ill-bred as to deny you."

"Yea, by God," said Gawain, "your speech is good; but violence is considered discourteous among my people, as is any gift that is not given with a good will. I am at your command to kiss when ye like. Ye may begin when ye please, and leave off whenever it likes you."

The lady stoops down and gracefully kisses his face. They converse long of the fears and joys of love.

1 A drink ratifies the agreement — as before.

2 A call for collecting the hounds.

1 The tough skin of the flanks.

15. "I should like to know from you, sir," said the peerless lady, "if it vexes you not, — what might be the reason that so young and so gallant person as ye now are, one so courteous and so knightly as ye are known everywhere to be, have never spoken of love. For in relating the pains of true knights, the chief thing praised in all of chivalry is the royal sport of love, — and the science of arms: it is the title, token, and text of their works; how heroes for their true love adventured their lives, endured for their sweethearts doleful hours, and afterwards avenged themselves by their valour; dispersed their care, and brought bliss to bower, with plenteous rewards for themselves. And ye are the most renowned knight of your time; your fame and your worship walks everywhere, — and now I have sat by you here two separate times, yet have I never heard from your head a single word that pertained at all to love, less or more. And ye, that are so courteous and so distinguished in your vows, ought willingly to show and teach to a young thing some tokens of the art of true love. Why are ye so rude who are so praised? Is it that ye deem me too dull to hearken to your dalliance? For shame! I came hither all alone to sit and learn from you some accomplishment: do teach me part of your skill while my lord is from home."

16. "In good faith," quoth Gawain, "God reward you! Great is the entertainment, and huge the pleasure to me, that so worthy a one as ye should come hither, and take pains with so poor a man, and play with your knight in any wise; it delights me. But to take upon myself the task of expounding true love, of touching upon the themes of that text, and tales of arms before you, who I wot well have more knowledge of that sort by the half than I or a hundred such have, or ever shall have so long as I live, — that were a manifold folly by my troth, dear one. But I would work your will with all my might, highly beholden to you as I am; and I wish evermore to be your servant, so God save me."

Thus the fair lady besought him, and tried him oft, for to have won him to wrong, — whatever it was she purposed; but he defended himself so fairly that no fault appeared, nor any evil on either side; they knew nought but joy. They laughed and played a long time, till at last she kissed him, took her leave fairly, and went her way.

17. Then the hero bestirred himself and rose to the mass; and afterwards their din-

ner was dight and splendidly served. The hero sported with the ladies all day, but the lord raced over the land full oft, following his uncouth swine, that rushed along the banks and bit in sunder the backs of his best brachets.¹ There he abode at his bay till bowmen broke it, and maugre his head made him move forth. Many fell arrows there flew when the folk gathered about, but yet at times he made the stoutest to start; till at the last he was so weary he could no more run; but with the haste that he might he won to a hole in a cleft by a rock, where the burn runs. He got the bank at his back and began to scrape; the ugly froth foamed from the corners of his mouth, and he whet his white tusks. It was not pleasant for all the bold hunters that stood about him to approach him even remotely; and to go nigh him durst none for fear of harm. He had hurt so many before, that all seemed then full loath to be more torn with the tusks of that savage and crazed beast.

18. When the knight came himself, reining his steed, and saw him bide at the bay near his men, he lighted nimbly down, left his courser, pulled out a bright brand and boldly strode forth, and hurried fast through the stream where the fell one abode. The wild creature was ware of the wight with weapon in hand, and heaved on high his hairs; so fiercely he snorted that many feared for their lord lest to him befell the worse. The swine rushed directly upon the hero, so that man and boar were both in a heap in the wildest of the water; but the boar had the worse, for the man marked him well as they first met and skilfully set his point exactly in the slot,² pierced him up to the hilt so that his heart split, and he gave way squealing and went quickly down the water. A hundred hounds seized him and fiercely bit on him. Men brought him to land and the dogs finished him.

19. There was blowing of the prize³ on many a loud horn, high halloing aloft by mighty hunters; brachets bayed the beast as the masters bade who were the chief huntsmen of that swift chase. Then awight that was wise in woodcraft begins skilfully to unlace⁴ this boar. First he hews off its head and sets it on high; and afterwards splits him all down his rough back, and takes out the bowels and singes them on the coals; then with bread mingled with these, he rewards

1 hounds.

2 The proper piercing spot in the chest.

3 The horn-blowing for the game's death.

4 cut up.

his hounds. Afterwards he cuts the brawn in fine broad shields, and has out the hastlets¹ in the proper manner. And now they bind the halves all whole together, and afterwards stoutly hang them on a stiff staff. Now with this same swine they take their way home. The boar's head was borne before the warrior who slew him at the stream through the force of his own strong hand. It seemed long to him until he saw Sir Gawain in the hall; then he called, and Gawain came promptly to take his fees there.

20. The lord jested full loudly, and merrily he laughed when he saw Sir Gawain; with pleasure he spoke. The good ladies were called and the household gathered. He showed them the shields and told them the tale of the girth and length of the wild swine; and also of his viciousness in the wood where he fled. That other knight full comely commended his deeds, and praised it as a great bag that he had made; for such a brawn of a beast, the bold man said, nor such sides of a swine, saw he never before. Then they handled the huge head; the courteous man praised it and made much of it to honour the lord.

"Now Gawain," quoth the good man, "this game is your own, by fine and fast foreword, truly ye know."

"It is sooth," quoth the hero; "and as truly all my getting I shall give you in turn, by my troth." He took the warrior about the neck and courteously kissed him, and another time he served him the same. "Now we are even," quoth the warrior, "to-night of all the covenants that we knit by law since I came hither."

Said the lord, "By St. Giles, ye are the best that I know! Ye will be rich in a short time, if ye drive such chaffer!"

21. Then they raised tables aloft on trestles, and cast cloths upon them. The clear light then appeared along the walls, as men set and distributed waxen torches all about the hall. Much mirth and glee rose up therein, about the fire on the hearth, and in various wise at the supper and after. Many noble songs they sang, as Christmas carols and new dance tunes, with all the mannerly mirth that a man can tell of. And ever our lovely knight sat beside the lady. Such seemly cheer she made to the hero, sought with such sly stolen glances to please the stalwart one, that the wight was all amazed, and wroth with himself. But he would not on account of his breeding prove

her, but responded in all courtesy, howsoever outrageous she might be. When they had played in the hall as long as their will lasted, the lord called to bedwards, and to the room with a fireplace they passed.

22. And there they drank and talked, and the lord proposed again to make the same arrangement for New Year's Eve. But the knight craved leave to depart on the morn, for it was nigh at the term that he must keep. The lord hindered him from that, persuaded him to linger, and said, "As I am true man, I pledge my troth thou shalt reach the green chapel to do thy tasks, sir, by New Year's light, long before prime. Therefore lie in thy loft and take thine ease; and I shall hunt in this holt and keep the covenant — change merchandise with thee when I return hither; for I have tried thee twice, and faithful I find thee; now, 'third time, best time.' Think on the morrow. Make we merry while we may, and be joyful; for a man can catch trouble whensoever he likes."

This was readily granted and Gawain stayed. Drink was quickly brought to them, and to bed they went with lights. Sir Gawain lay and slept full still and soft all night; the lord, mindful of his hunting, was dight full early.

23. After mass he and his men took a morsel. Merry was the morning. He asks for his mount, and all the sportsmen who should accompany him on horse were ready mounted on their steeds before the hall gates. Wondrous fair was the field, for the frost still lingered. The sun rose in a rack of ruddy red, and drove all the clouds from the welkin. The hunters uncoupled by a holt side, and the rocks in the forest rang for the noise of their horns. Some dogs fell on a scent where the fox had loitered; followed it oft obliquely through the cunning of their wiles. A kennet² cried upon it; the huntsman encouraged him, and his fellows hastened after, panting thickly. They ran forth in a rabble on Reynard's very track, and he hurried before them. Soon they found him; and when they actually saw him they chased him fast, baying him full fiercely with a huge noise. And he trants³ and turns through many a rough grove; doubles and hearkens by hedges full often. At the last by a little ditch he leaps over a spinny, and steals out full stilly by a rough rand.³ Half escaped from the wood he turns with wiles from the hounds; but then he arrived, ere he knew it, at a chosen

¹ small hound.

² twists.

³ unploughed strip by woodside.

¹ cutlets.

stand, where in an instant three stout hunters in gray threatened him at once. He blenched again quickly, and bravely started off; with all the woe in the world, he turned away to the wood.

24. Then was it a pure joy to listen to the hounds, when all the gathered mute¹ got view of him. The cry they set on his head at the sight was as if all the resounding cliffs had clattered down in a heap. Here he was halloed when the hunters met him, loudly cried upon with noisy calls; there he was threatened and often called thief; and ever the ticklers were at his tail so that he could not tarry. Oft he was run at when he raked¹⁵ out, and oft he reeled in again, so wily was Reynard. And ever he led the bespattered lord and his troop in this manner among the hills, now in them, now over, now under, while the courteous knight at home slept²⁰ wholesomely within the comely curtains on the cold morn.

But the lady for love cared not to sleep nor to give up the purpose that bode in her heart; but up she rose quickly and took her way thither in a gay mantle meetly reaching to the earth, and furred full fine with skins of the best. No ornaments of gold on her head; but only the bright stones set about her tressour² in clusters of twenty. With her fair face and her lovely throat all naked, her breast bare before and behind too, she comes within the chamber door and closes it after her, throws up a window and calls on the wight, and smartly thus stirred him with her fair cheery words. "Ah man, how can you sleep, this morning is so clear!" Though he was drowsing deep, yet could he hear her.

25. In the dreary depths of a dream the noble was sunk, like a man suffering from many sad thoughts, how destiny should dight him his weird at the green chapel that day when he met the man, and had to abide his buffet without more debate. But when he had fairly recovered his wits, he emerged from his dreams and answered with haste. The lovely lady came laughing sweetly, stooped over his fair face and courteously kissed him. He welcomed her worthily with choice cheer. To see her so glorious, and so gaily attired, so faultless of feature, and so lovely of colour, warmed his heart with welling joy. With smooth and gracious smiling they straightway waxed mirthful. All was bliss and good cheer that passed between them. They exchanged goodly words; much happiness they felt, and great was the peril

between them, unless Mary thought of her knight.

26. For that beauteous princess constrained him so sorely, and the danger⁵ pressed him so nigh, that of necessity it behooved him either accept her love or rudely refuse it. He thought much of his courtesy, lest he should prove a clown; and more on his villainy if he should do sin, and be traitor to the hero who owned the castle. "God shield!" quoth the warrior, "that shall not befall!" With a little love-dalliance he laid aside all the pointed speeches that sprang from her mouth.

Quoth the lady to the hero: "Ye deserve blame if ye love not her who is so near you, — of all creatures in the world most wounded in heart; — unless indeed ye have a sweet-heart, a dearer being, that pleases you better, and ye have plighted faith so firmly to that gentle one that ye care not to loosen it. — Verily now that is what I believe, and I pray you that you tell me truly; for all the loves in the world deny not the truth with guile." "By St. John!" said the knight, and courteously he smiled, "I have none, and none will I have."

27. "That is the worst of all!" quoth the lady. "I am answered indeed, to my sorrow. Kiss me now comely and I shall go hence. I can only mourn in the world as a maid that loved much."

Sighing she stooped down and kissed him seemly; and then she severed from him, and said as she stood, "Now, dear, at this departing do me this comfort; give me somewhat of thy gift, thy glove if it might be, that I may think on thee, sir, to lessen my mourning."

28. "Now in truth," quoth that man, "I would I had here for thy love, the dearest thing that I wield; for truly ye have right oft in reason deserved a greater reward than I could reckon. But to exchange with you love-tokens, that would profit but little. It is not for your honor to have at this time a glove of Gawain's gift for a keepsake; and I am here on an errand in lands uncouth, and have no men with mails full of precious things for remembrances at this moment; and that mislikes me, lady. But every man must act according to his circumstances, and none should take it ill or repine."

"Now, courteous and honourable one," quoth that lovesome lady, "though I shall have nothing of yours, yet shall ye have of mine."

28. She reached him a rich ring of red

1 pack.

2 headdress, caul.

gold work with a gleaming stone standing aloft, that shed blushing beams like the bright sun; know ye well it was worth wealth full huge. But the man refused it, and readily he said: "I desire no great gifts, my gay one, at this time. I have naught to give you, and naught will I take."

She offered it him full pressingly, and he refused her offer, and swore swiftly on his sooth that he would not take it. And she sorrowed that he refused, and said thereafter, "If ye refuse my ring, since it seems too rich, and ye would not be so highly beholden to me, I shall give you my girdle, that will enrich you less."

She lightly caught a lace that went about her sides, knit upon her kirtle under the bright mantle. It was adorned with green silk, and ornamented with gold, broidered all around, decked with fringes; and that she offered to the hero, and gaily besought that, though it were unworthy, he would take it. And he denied that he would in any wise take either gold or present ere God sent him grace to achieve the chance that he had chosen there. "And therefore, I pray you, be not displeased, and give over your attempt; for I intend never to consent. I am dearly beholden to you because of your entertainment; and ever in hot and in cold I will be your true servant."

29. "Now refuse ye this silk," said the lady then, "because it is simple in itself, as it certainly seems to be? Lo! little it is, and less it is worth; but whoso knew the virtues that are knit therein, he would esteem it at a greater price peradventure; for whatsoever man is girt with this green lace, while he has it fittingly wrapped about him, there is no warrior under heaven that can wound him; for he could not be slain by any device in the world."

Then the knight paused, and it came to his heart that it would be a jewel for the peril that awaited him when he arrived at the chapel to undergo his ordeal. Could he manage to be unslain, that were a noble device. Then he indulged her entreaties and suffered her to speak; and she pressed the belt on him and offered it to him eagerly. And he accepted it, and she gave it him with a good will, and besought him for her sake never to discover it, but to conceal it loyally from her lord. The man agreed that never person should know it indeed but they twain. Full oft he thanked her, right glad in heart and thought. By that she had kissed the stout knight three times.

30. Then she takes her leave and leaves him there, for more entertainment she could not get from that man. When she was gone Sir Gawain bestirs himself, rises and dresses in noble array. He lays up the love-lace the lady had given him, hides it full cleverly where he can find it again. Then promptly he takes his way to the chapel; quietly approaches to the priest and prays him there that he would elevate his life, and teach him better how his soul should be saved when he should go hence. Then he shrives him cleanly and shows his misdeeds, both the more and the less, beseeches mercy, and begs for absolution. And the priest assails him thoroughly and set him as clean as if doomsday had been due on the morrow. And afterwards Gawain makes more mirth among the fair ladies that day with comely carols and all kinds of joy than ever he did before, till the dark night. Every one had pleasure of him there, and said indeed that he had never been so merry since he came hither.

31. Now let him linger in that place, where may love betide him. The lord is still in the field leading his men. He has overtaken this fox that he followed so long, as he sprinted over a spinny to spy the rascal, where he heard the hounds that hastened fast after him. Reynard came running through a rough grove, and all the rabble in a rout right at his heels. The man was ware of the game, and warily abode; pulled out his bright brand and struck at the beast; and he dodged from the sharp weapon and would have turned; but a dog seized him ere he could, and right before the horse's feet they all fell on him and worried this wily one with a great noise. The lord lighted quickly, and caught him forthwith; pulled him full hastily out of the dogs' mouths, and holding him high over his head, halloed fast; and there many fierce hounds bayed him. Hunters hied them thither with horns full many, ever blowing the recheat¹ till they saw the hero. As soon as his noble company was come, all that bare bugle blew at once, and all the others that had no horns halloed. It was the merriest mute² that ever men heard—the rich riot that there was raised for Reynard's soul. They rewarded the hounds there, stroked them and rubbed their heads; and afterwards they took Reynard and turned off his coat.

32. And then they hastened home, for it

¹ The note that recalls all the dogs.

² noise of the whole band.

was nigh night, blowing full stoutly in their great horns. The lord alighted at last at his dear home, found fire on the floor, and the hero beside it, Sir Gawain the good, that glad was withal among the ladies; in their love he had much joy. He wore a mantle of blue that reached to the earth; his surcoat, that was softly furred, became him well; and his hood of the same hung on his shoulder. Trimmed all about with fine fur were both. He met this good man in the middle of the floor, and all joyfully he greeted him, and goodly he said: "Now I shall fulfill our covenant, that we have just made, where no drink was spared." Then he embraces the knight and kisses him thrice with as much gusto and as soberly as he could give them.

"By Christ!" quoth the other knight, "ye get much bliss in the profits of this business — if ye drive good bargains!"

"Of the bargain, no matter," quoth curtly that other, "so long as the debts that I owed are properly paid."

"Mary!" quoth the other man, "my offering is the worse, for I have hunted all this day, and naught have I got but this foul fox-fell; the fiend have the good ones! And that is full poor to pay for such fine things as ye have given me here, three such rare kisses."

"It is enough," quoth Sir Gawain; "I thank you, by the rood." And as they stood there the lord told him how the fox was slain.

33. With mirth and minstrelsy, with meats at their will, they made as merry as any men could. With laughing of ladies, with merry jests, Gawain and the good man were both as glad as if the court were mad, or else drunk. Both the man and his retinue made many jokes till the season arrived when they must sever; the men had to go to their beds at last. Then humbly this gentle man takes his leave of the lord first; and fairly he thanks him. "For such a joyous sojourn as I have had here, for the honor you have shown me at this high feast, the high king reward you! I can only give you myself to be one of your men, if that pleases you. For I must needs, as ye know, proceed, to-morrow, if ye will grant me some men to show, as you promised, the way to the green chapel, as God will suffer me to take on New Year's day the doom of my fate."

"In good faith," quoth the good man, "with a good will! All that ever I promised you, I will perform." Therewith he assigns a servant to set him in the way, and conduct him by the downs, that he should without

hesitation travel through the forest and fare at the best in the woods. The lord thanked Gawain for the worship he had been willing to show him. Then the knight took his leave of the beautiful ladies.

34. With care and with kissing he speaks to them, and many earnest thanks he presses upon them. And they returned him the same again promptly; they entrusted him to Christ with sighings full sad. Afterwards he graciously departs from the household; each man that he met he thanked him for his service and his solace, and the various pains with which they had been busy to serve him. And each man was as sad to sever from him there as if they had ever dwelt worthily with that hero. Then with people and with light he was led to his chamber and blithely brought to bed to be at his rest. Whether he slept soundly I dare not say, for he had much to think of on the morrow if he would. Let him lie there; he was near what he sought. If ye will be still a while I shall tell you how they fared.

FYTTE THE FOURTH

1. Now nighs the New Year, and the night passes. The day drives on to the dark, as God bids; but outside wild storms wakened in the world; clouds cast the cold keenly to the earth; with discomfort enough to the naked, the snow from the north flew sharply, and nipped the game. The blustering wind blew from the heights, and drove each dale full of great drifts. The man who lay in his bed heard it right well; though he locks his lids, full little he sleeps. By each cock that crew he knew well the hour. Promptly he leaped up ere the day sprang, for there was the light of a lamp that gleamed in his chamber. He called to his chamberlain, who quickly answered him, and bade him bring his burnie and saddle his horse. The chamberlain gets up and fetches him his weeds, and arrays Sir Gawain in proper fashion. First he dressed him in his clothes to keep out the cold, and then he put on the rest of his harness, that had been well kept, both mail and plate, and brightly polished. The rings of his rich burnie had been rocked from the rust,¹ and all was fresh as at first; and Gawain was fain to give thanks for it. The attendant had wiped each piece well and often. Then the noblest man betwixt here and Greece bade his steed be brought.

2. Meanwhile, he threw upon himself his

¹ That is, in a barrel of sand.

finest weeds; his surcoat with its cognisance of excellent work, virtuous stones set upon velvet, all wrought about and bound with embroidered seams, and fairly furred within with rare skins. Yet left he not the lace, the lady's gift, — that forgot not Gawain for his own good. When he had belted his brand upon his broad haunches, he dressed his love-token double about him, the knight swathed sweetly about his waist the girdle of green silk, which became him well, upon the royal red cloth that was fair to see. But this hero wore not the girdle for its wealth, for pride of the pendants, though they were polished, and though the glittering gold gleamed on the ends; but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer, to await his doom without resistance, with no brand or knife to defend him. By this the good man is ready and goes out quickly. Full often he thanks the distinguishing company.

3. Gringolet the huge and strong was ready, who had been kept skilfully in the safest manner. The proud horse in his splendid condition longed for spurring. The hero approached him, noticed his coat, and said soberly, and by his sooth swore — "Here, in this castle, is a company that are mindful of courtesy. The man who maintains them, joy may he have; the dear lady, love betide her in this life, since they for charity cherish a guest and uphold honor in their hand. May the Being reward them who holds the heaven on high — and also you all. And if I might live any longer in the world I should give you some reward if I could." Then he stepped into stirrup and strode aloft. His servant offered him his shield; he put it on his shoulder. He spurred Gringolet with his gilt heels, and the steed jumped on the stone; no longer he stood still, but pranced. Gawain's servant, who bore his lance and helm, was by then on the horse. "This castle I entrust to Christ; may he give it aye good chance!"

4. The bridge was let down, and the broad gates unbarred and borne open on both sides. The hero crossed himself quickly and passed the boards, praised the porter, who knelt before him giving good day and praying God that he save Gawain. And so he went on his way with his one man that should teach him how to find that dismal place where he should receive the rueful blow. They rode by banks where boughs are bare; they climbed by cliffs where the cold clings; the sky was upheld, but it was ugly beneath; mist hung on the moor and melted on the

mount; each hill had a hat, a huge mist-cloak. Brooks boiled and broke from the banks about, shattering sheer on their shores where they showered down. Dreary was the way, where they should travel by the wood, till soon came the season when the sun rises at that time. They were on a hill full high, the white snow about them, when the man that rode beside him bade his master abide.

5. "I have brought you hither, sir, at this time; and now ye are not far from that famous spot that ye have asked and inquired so specially after. But I shall say to you forsooth, since I know you, and ye are a man that I love well, if ye would work by my wit ye should be the better for it. The place that ye press to is held full perilous. There dwells in that waste a wight the worst upon earth; for he is stiff and stern and loves to strike; and greater he is than any man in the world, and his body bigger than the four best that are in Arthur's house, and bigger than Hector or any other. He maintains that adventure at the green chapel. There passes by that place none so proud in arms but he dints him to death with dint of his hand. For he is a man without measure and uses no mercy; for be it churl or chaplain that rides by the chapel, monk or mass-priest, or any man else, he likes as well to kill him as to go alive himself. Therefore I tell ye as truly as ye sit in the saddle, come ye there ye shall be killed — trust me well — though ye had twenty lives to spend. He has dwelt here full long and caused much strife in the land. Against his sore dints ye cannot defend yourself.

6. "Therefore, good Sir Gawain, let the fellow alone, and go away some other road, for God's sake. Repair to some other country, where Christ may speed you; and I shall hie me home again, and promise you further — which I will swear by God and all his good saints, so help me God and the halidom and oaths enough — that I will loyally conceal you, and never tell tale that ever ye fled for any man that I know of."

"Gramercy," quoth Gawain. And sternly he added. "Well worth thee, man, who wishes my good; and I well believe thou wouldst loyally conceal me. But if thou kept promise never so faithfully, and I gave up here, sought for fear to fly as you advise, I were a knight coward; I could not be excused. But I will go to the chapel whatever chance may fall, and talk with that same man the tale that I like, be it good or evil, as it pleases fate to have it. Though he be

a stern champion to cope with, and armed with a club, full well can God manage to save his servants."

7. "Mary!" quoth that other man, "now thou sayest as much as that thou wilt take upon thyself thine own destruction; if it pleases thee to lose thy life, I shall not let nor hinder thee. Have here thy helm on thy head, thy spear in thy hand; and ride down this same lane by yon rock-side till thou be brought to the bottom of the rugged valley; then look a little up the grassy slope on thy left hand, and thou shalt see in that ravine the chapel itself, and the burly man on the field who keeps it. Now farewell in God's name, Gawain the noble, for all the gold in the world I would not go with thee nor bear thee fellowship through this wood a foot further."

At that the man turned his bridle in the wood, hit the horse with the heels as hard as he could; leaped over the land, and left the knight there all alone.

"By God's self," quoth Gawain, "I will neither grieve nor groan. To God's will I am full obedient, and to him I have entrusted myself."

8. Then he spurs Gringolet and follows the path; pushes in by a hollow beside a thicket; rides through the rough slope right to the dale; and then he looked about him, and wild it seemed to him. He saw no sign of dwelling anywhere around, but on both sides high steep banks, and rough hunched crags with projecting stones; the shadows of the cliffs seemed to him terrible. Then he paused and held back his horse, and oft changed his cheer while seeking the chapel. He saw none such on any side, and strange it seemed to him. But soon, a little distance off on a grassy spot he descried a mound as it were, a smooth hill by the bank of the stream near a ford of the flood that ran there. The burn bubbled there as if it were boiling. The knight urges his steed, and comes to the hill; lights nimbly down, and ties the rein and his rich bridle to a tree by a rough branch; then he turns to the hill and walks about it, debating with himself what it might be. It had a hole at the end and on either side, and was overgrown with grass in clumps everywhere, and was all hollow within — nothing but an old cave or a crevice of an old crag. He could not understand it at all. "Alas, Lord," quoth the gentle knight, "can this be the green chapel? Here about midnight the devil might tell his matins."

9. "Now," quoth Gawain, "it certainly is mysterious here; this oratory is ugly, overgrown with herbs. Well it beseems the wight clad in green here to do his devotions in the devil's wise. Now I feel in my five wits it is the fiend that has made this bargain with me, to destroy me here. This is a chapel of mischance; may ill fortune betide it! It is the cursedest kirk that ever I came in!"

With high helm on his head, his lance in his hand, he strides up to the rock of the rude dwelling. Then he heard from that high hill, in a rough cave, on a bank beyond the brook, a marvellously savage noise. Lo, the cliff clattered as though it would split, as if one were grinding a scythe on a grindstone. It whirled and screeched like water at a mill; it rushed and rang that it was

20 ruth to hear.
"By God," quoth Gawain then, "that gear, I fancy, is being prepared to give me a good reception. Yet though I must lose my life, fear shall never make me change colour."

10. Then the knight called full high: "Who dwells in this place to keep covenant with me? For now the good Gawain is passing right here. If any wight wishes ought, let him come hither fast, now or never, to fulfill his need!"

"Abide!" quoth one on the bank over his head. "Thou shalt have in all haste that which I promised thee once."

35 Yet he kept on with that noise sharply for a while, turning and whetting, ere he would come down. And then he crossed by a crag and came from a hole, whirling out of a dark place with a fell weapon — a Danish axe new dight, to give the blow with. It had fast to the helve a great head, sharpened on the stone. Four feet long was the weapon — no less, by that lace that gleamed full bright. And the man in the green was arrayed as before — both his skin and his limbs, locks, and beard; save that on foot he strides fairly on the earth. He set the steel shaft to the stone and stalked beside it. When he came to the water, where he did not wish to wade, he hopped over on his axe, and fiercely advanced, with savage ferocity pacing the broad snow-covered glade. Sir Gawain met the knight and bowed to him, not at all low. The other said, "Now, sweet sir, in a covenant a man can trust thee."

11. "Gawain," quoth the green warrior, "may God preserve thee. Indeed thou art

welcome, hero, to my place; and thou hast timed thy travel as a true man should. And thou knowest the covenants made between us; at this time twelve month, thou tookest what fell to thee, — and I at this New Year was to repay you handsomely. And now we are in this valley entirely alone; here are no men to part us, however we may behave. Have thy helm off thy head, and have here thy pay. Make no more debate than I offered thee then, when thou whipped off my head at one blow."

"Nay," quoth Gawain, "by God that lent me life, I shall grudge thee not a whit whatever misfortune falls. But arrange thee for thy one stroke, and I shall stand still and hinder thee not the least from doing the work as you like."

He bent the neck and bowed down, showing the flesh all bare; and behaved as if he cared not. For no dread would he flinch.

12. Then the man in the green got ready quickly, gathered up his grim tool to smite Gawain. With all the might in his body he bare it aloft, and aimed a savage blow as though he wished to kill him. Had it driven down as earnestly as he feinted, the ever doughty one would have been dead of his dint. But Gawain glanced to one side on the gisarm as it came gliding down to slay him there in the glade, and shrank a little with the shoulders from the sharp iron. The other warrior with a quick motion withheld the bright weapon, and then he reproved the prince with many proud words. "Thou art not Gawain," said the man, "who is held so good, who never flinched for any army by hill nor by vale; and now thou fleest for fear before thou feelest any harm. Such cowardice I never heard of that knight. I neither winced nor fled, sir, when thou didst strike, nor tried any tricks in King Arthur's house. My head flew to my foot, and yet I never budged; and thou, ere any harm taken, art fearful in heart. Wherefore the better man I ought to be called for it."

"I flinched once," quoth Gawain, "and will do so no more. Yet if my head should fall on the stones, I cannot restore it."

13. "But make ready, sir, by thy faith, and bring me to the point. Deal to me my destiny, and do it promptly; for I shall stand thee a stroke, and not start again till thine axe has hit me — have here my troth."

"Have at thee then!" quoth the other, and heaves it aloft, and aims as savagely as if he were mad. He strikes at him mightily, but touches the man not; for he

withheld his hand cleverly ere it could hurt. Gawain awaits it properly and flinches with no member, but stands still as a stone, or a stump that is twisted into the rocky ground with a hundred roots.

Then merrily spoke the man in the green: "So, now thou hast thy heart whole it behoves me to hit. Now keep back the fine hood that Arthur gave thee, and see if thou canst keep thy neck whole from this stroke."

Said Gawain in great anger: "Why, thrash on, thou wild man! Thou threatenest too long. I guess that thine own heart is timid!"

"Forsooth," quoth the other warrior, "thou speakest so fiercely that I will not delay thine errand a bit longer." Then he takes his stride to strike and knits both brow and lip. No wonder Gawain mislikes it and gives up all thought of escape.

14. Lightly he lifts his axe and lets the edge come down fairly on the bare neck. Yet though he smote rudely, it hurt him but little; only cut him on one side so that it severed the skin. The sharp bit reached the flesh through the fair fat, so that the bright blood shot over his shoulders to the earth. And when the hero saw the blood glint on the snow, he leaped forth more than a spear's length, eagerly seized his helm, cast it on his head, threw his shoulders under his fair shield, pulled out a bright sword and fiercely spoke. Never in this world since he was born of his mother was he half so blithe.

"Cease, sir, of thy blow! Offer me no more. I have without strife taken a stroke in this place; and if thou givest me more, I shall promptly repay and yield quickly again, trust thou that! Only one stroke falls to me here. The covenant which we made in Arthur's halls provided just that; and therefore, courteous sir, now hold!"

15. The warrior turned from him and rested on his axe. He set the shaft on the ground, leaned on the head, and beheld how the doughty hero stood his ground grimly, fully armed and devoid of fear. In his heart it pleased him. Then with a great voice, and a huge laugh, he spoke merrily to the hero: "Bold sir, in this place be not so savage. Nobody has here unmannerly mishandled thee, nor done but according to covenant made at the king's court. I promised thee a stroke and thou hast it; hold thee well paid. I release thee of the remnant, of all other rights. If I had been skilful peradventure I could have given you a worse buffet. First I menaced you merrily with a pure feint, and gave thee no blow;

which was but justice, considering the covenant which we made on the first night, and which thou held with me trustily; for truly all the gain thou gave me as a good man should. The second feint this morning, sir, I proffered thee, because thou didst kiss my fair wife and didst hand the kisses over to me; for these two occasions I gave thee here but two bare feints without harm. A true man truly restores; such an one need dread no harm. At the third time thou didst fail; and so take thee that tap.

16. "For it is my weed that thou wearest, that same woven girdle. Mine own wife gave it thee, I know well, forsooth. Now know I well thy kisses, and thy virtues also. And as for the wooing of my wife, I managed it myself. I sent her to try thee, and truly it seems to me thou art the most faultless hero that ever went on foot. As a pearl is of greater price than white peas, so is Gawain, in good faith, compared with other gay knights. But in this case, sir, you lacked a little, and loyalty failed you. But that was for no amorous work, nor wooing either, but because ye loved your life, — the less I blame you."

That other brave man stood a great while in a study; so stricken was he for grief that he groaned within. All the blood of his breast rushed to his face; and he shrank for shame when the warrior talked. This was the first word that the man spoke — "Cursed be cowardice and covetousness both! In you is villainy and vice, that destroy virtue." Then he caught at the knot and loosed the fastening; fiercely reached the belt to the warrior himself. "Lo! there is the deception, foul may it fall! For fear of thy knock cowardice taught me to make a truce with covetousness, to forsake my nature, which is generosity and loyalty, that belong to knights. Now am I faulty and false, and a coward have ever been. From treachery and untruth ever come sorrow and care. Here I confess to you, knight, that my conduct is all faulty. Let me but please you now, and after I shall beware."

17. Then the other laughed and said courteously: "I hold it quite remedied, the harm that I had. Thou hast made a clean confession, acknowledging all thy misdeeds, and hast received the penance openly from the point of my edge. I hold thee quit of that plight, and purified as clean as if thou hadst never forfeited since thou was first born. And I give thee, sir, the girdle that is gold hemmed. Since it is green, as is my gown,

Sir Gawain, ye may think upon this same adventure where thou goest forth among great princes; and this shall be a genuine token among chivalrous knights of the adventure of the green chapel, and ye shall come again this New Year to my dwelling, and we shall revel the remnant of this rich feast full well." The lord pressed the invitation and said, "With my wife, who was your great enemy, I think we shall reconcile you."

18. "Nay, forsooth," quoth the hero; and seizing his helm, he took it off quickly and thanked the warrior. "I have had a good visit, bliss betide you; and may He pay you well who directs all mercies. Commend me to that courteous one, your comely mate; both the one and the other, my honoured ladies, who have thus with their craft quaintly beguiled their knight. But it is no wonder that a fool should rave, and through wiles of women be won to sorrow. For so was Adam beguiled by one, and Solomon by many, indeed; and Samson also, Delilah dealt him his weird; and David thereafter was deceived by Bathsheba, who suffered much sorrow. Since these men were plagued by their wives, it were a huge gain to love them well and believe them not — if a person but could; for these men were of old the best, and the most fortunate, excellent above all others under the heavens; and all they were beguiled by women whom they had to do with. If I be now deceived, meseems I might be excused."

19. "But your girdle," quoth Gawain, "God reward you for it! That will I keep with good will; not for the precious gold, nor the samite nor the silk, nor the wide pendants, for its wealth nor for its beauty nor for its fine work; but in sign of my fault I shall behold it oft; when I ride in renown I shall lament to myself the fault and the deceit of the crabbed flesh, how tender it is to catch stains of filth; and thus when pride shall prick me for prowess of arms, a look on this love-lace shall moderate my heart. But one thing I would pray you — may it displease you not — since ye are lord of the land yonder where I have stayed worshipfully with you — may the Being who upholds the heaven and sits on high repay you for it! — how name ye your right name? and then no more."

"That shall I tell thee truly," quoth the other then. "Bernlak de Hautdesert I am called in this land through the might of Morgan la Fay, who dwells in my house. She has acquired deep learning, hard-won

skill, many of the masteries of Merlin;— for she has at times dealt in rare magic with that renowned clerk, who knows all your knights at home. Morgan the Goddess is therefore her name; no person is so haughty but she can tame him.

20. "She sent me in this wise to your rich hall to assay its pride and try if it were true that circulates about the great renown of the Round Table. She prepared for me this wonder to take away your wits, to have grieved Guinevere and caused her to die through fright of that same man, that ghostly speaker with his head in his hand before the high table. That is she, the ancient lady at home. She is even thine aunt, Arthur's half-sister, the daughter of that Duchess of Tintagel upon whom dear Uther afterwards begot Arthur, that is now king. Therefore, I beg you, sir, to come to thine aunt; make merry in my house; my people love thee, and I like thee as well, sir, by my faith as I do any man under God for thy great truth."

But he answered him nay, he would in no wise. They embraced and kissed, each entrusted other to the Prince of Paradise, and they parted right there in the cold. Gawain on horse full fair rides boldly to the king's court, and the knight all in green whithersoever he would.

21. Wild ways in the world Gawain now rides on Gringolet, he who had got the boon of his life. Oft he harboured in houses, and oft without; and many an adventure in vale he had, and won oft; but that I care not at this time to mention in my tale. The hurt was whole that he had got in his neck; and he bare the glistening belt about him, crossed obliquely like a baldric, the lace fastened under his left arm with a knot, in token that he was taken in a fault. And thus he comes to the court, the knight all sound. There wakened joy in that dwelling when

the great ones knew that good Gawain had come; joyous it seemed to them. The king kisses the knight, and the queen also; and afterwards many a sure knight, who sought to embrace him and asked him of his journey. And wondrously he tells it, confessing all the trials that he had, the adventure of the chapel, the behavior of the knight, the love of the lady—and, at the last, the lace. He showed them the nick in his neck that he caught at the lord's hands for his unloyalty. He grieved when he had to tell it; he groaned for sorrow, and the blood rushed to his face for shame when he declared it.

22. "Lo! lord," quoth the hero, as he handled the lace, "this that I bear in my neck is the badge of this blame. This is the evil and the loss that I have got from the cowardice and covetousness that I showed there. This is the token of untruth that I am taken in, and I must needs wear it while I may last; for none may hide this shame without mishap, for where it once is incurred, depart will it never."

The king and all the court comfort the knight. They laugh loud at his tale, and lovingly agree that the lords and ladies that belong to the Table, each knight of the brotherhood, should have a baldric, an oblique band about him of a bright green, and wear that for the sake of the hero. And that emblem was accorded the renown of the Round Table, and he was ever after honoured that had it.

As it is told in the best book of romance, thus in Arthur's day this adventure betid, which the Brutus books bear witness of. After Brutus the bold hero first came hither, when the siege and the assault had ceased at Troy, many adventures of this sort happened. Now may He that bore the crown of thorns bring us to his bliss. AMEN.

HONY SOIT QUI MAL PENCE

THE POPULAR BALLADS

The Popular Ballads are not, in the strict sense of the word, literature at all. They were not written, but composed or improvised about some topic of popular interest to the music of a popular tune. Once started on their way, they passed from generation to generation only by oral tradition. Any singer of them felt quite free to change the wording or to add new stanzas of his own invention, till they became a composite of many minds, the creation not of a single poet but of a whole people. Nor have they any single correct and authentic form; most of them have been preserved to us in several varying versions. Many of them originated as long ago as the fourteenth century, or even earlier; but few of them found their way into printed books before the latter part of the eighteenth century, when their great poetical value was first generally recognized. In 1765, Bishop Percy published a collection of them which he found written down in a manuscript which dates from the

middle of the seventeenth century. Others were collected by Sir Walter Scott, who wrote them down from the lips of Scottish peasants to whom they had descended by oral tradition. The standard collection is that of the American scholar, F. J. Child, in five volumes — *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Boston, 1882–98 — where each ballad is given in many variant versions. An abridgement of this great work by Sargent and Kittredge is published in the Cambridge Poets series by Houghton Mifflin Company. An interesting critical study of the ballads is that of F. B. Gummere: *The Popular Ballad*, Boston, 1907.

Though the creation and possession of humble peasant folk, the ballads concern themselves usually with the fortunes of lords and ladies and gentlefolk — nearly always with their tragic fortunes. The world of the ballads is filled with battle and murder and sudden death. The story is told — or often not so much told as dramatically revealed — with complete objectivity, with hardly a trace of moralizing or comment. The method of the ballad conforms to certain established conventions. Favorite devices, stock epithets, occur again and again; events happen in threes or sevens or nines. Most characteristic is the use of repetition — a peculiar sort of repetition, which with each iteration of a given phrase or formula adds a new significant element to the situation.

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY

1. "Rise up, rise up, now, Lord Douglas,"
 she says,
 "And put on your armour so bright,
Let it never be said that a daughter of
 thine
 Was married to a lord under night.
 2. "Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons, 5
 And put on your armour so bright,
And take better care of your youngest
 sister,
 For your eldest's awa the last night."
 3. He's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
 And himself on a dapple grey, 10
With a bugelet horn hung down by his
 side,
And lightly they rode away.
 4. Lord William lookit oer his left shoulder,
 To see what he could see,
And there he spy'd her seven brethren
 bold, 15
 Come riding over the lee.
 5. "Light down, light down, Lady Mar-
 gret," he said,
 "And hold my steed in your hand,
Until that against your seven brethren
 bold,
 And your father I mak a stand." 20
 6. She held his steed in her milk-white hand,
 And never shed one tear,
Until that she saw her seven brethren fa,
 And her father hard fighting, who
 lovd her so dear.
 7. "O hold your hand, Lord William!" she
 said, 25
 "For your strokes they are wondrous
 sair;
- True lovers I can get many a ne,
 But a father I can never get mair."
8. O she's taen out her handkerchief,
 It was o the holland sae fine, 30
And aye she dighted ' her father's bloody
 wounds,
 That were redder than the wine.
 9. "O chuse, O chuse, Lady Margret," he
 said,
 "O whether will ye gang or bide?"
 "I'll gang, I'll gang, Lord William," she
 said, 35
 "For ye have left me no other guide."
 10. He's lifted her on a milk-white steed,
 And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his
 side,
And slowly they baith rade away. 40
 11. O they rade on, and on they rade,
 And a' by the light of the moon,
Until they came to yon wan water,
 And there they lighted down.
 12. They lighted down to tak a drink 45
 Of the spring that ran sae clear,
And down the stream ran his gude heart's
 blood,
And sair she gan to fear.
 13. "Hold up, hold up, Lord William," she
 says,
 "For I fear that you are slain;" 50
 "'Tis naething but the shadow of my
 scarlet cloak,
 That shines in the water sae plain."
 14. O they rade on, and on they rade,
 And a' by the light of the moon,
 I dressed.

Until they cam to his mother's ha door, 55
And there they lighted down.

15. "Get up, get up, lady mother," he says,
"Get up, and let me in!"
Get up, get up, lady mother," he says,
"For this night my fair lady I've
win. 60

16. "O mak my bed, lady mother," he
says,
"O mak it braid and deep,
And lay lady Margret close at my back,
And the sounder I will sleep."

17. Lord William was dead lang ere mid-
night, 65
Lady Margret lang ere day,
And all true lovers that go thegither,
May they have mair luck than they!

18. Lord William was buried in St. Mary's
kirk,
Lady Margret in Mary's quire; 70
Out o the lady's grave grew a bonny red
rose,
And out o the knight's a brier.

19. And they twa met, and they twa plat,¹
And fain they wad be near;
And a' the warld might ken right weel 75
They were twa lovers dear.

20. But bye and rade the Black Douglas,
And wow but he was rough!
For he pulld up the bonny brier,
And flang 't in St. Mary's Loch. 80

EDWARD

1. "Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
Edward, Edward,
Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae sad gang yee O?"
"O I hae killed my hauke sae guid, 5
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot hee O."

2. "Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward, 10
Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee O."
"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my reid-roan steid, 15
That erst was sae fair and frie O."

1 intertwined.

3. "Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat
mair,

Edward, Edward,
Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat
mair,

Sum other dule¹ ye drie² O." 20

"O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O!"

4. "And whatten penance wul ye drie for
that, 25

Edward, Edward,
And whatten penance wul ye drie for
that?

My deir son, now tell me O."
"Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither, 30
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea O."

5. "And what wul ye doe wi your towirs
and your ha,

Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye doe wi your towirs
and your ha, 35
That were sae fair to see O?"

"Ile let thame stand tul they down fa,
Mither, mither,
Ile let thame stand tul they down fa,
For here nevir mair maun³ I bee O." 40

6. "And what wul ye leive to your bairns
and your wife,

Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns
and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovir the sea O?"

"The warldis room, late them beg thrae
life, 45

Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae
life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see O."

7. "And what wul ye leive to your ain
mither deir,

Edward, Edward? 50
And what wul ye leive to your ain mither
deir?

My deir son, now tell me O."
"The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir, 55
Sic counsels ye gave to me O."

1 sorrow.

2 endure.

3 must.

9. And he has till his sister gane:
 "Now, sister, rede ye mee;
 O sall I marrie the nut-browne bride, 35
 And set Fair Annet free?"
10. "I'se rede ye tak Fair Annet, Thomas,
 And let the browne bride alane;
 Lest ye sould sigh, and say, Alace,
 What is this we brought hame!" 40
11. "No, I will tak my mither's counsel,
 And marrie me owt o hand;
 And I will tak the nut-browne bride,
 Fair Annet may leive the land."
12. Up then rose Fair Annet's father, 45
 Twa hours or it wer day,
 And he is gane into the bower
 Wherein Fair Annet lay.
13. "Rise up, rise up, Fair Annet," he
 says,
 "Put on your silken sheene; ¹
 Let us gae to St. Marie's kirke,
 And see that rich weddeen." 50
14. "My maides, gae to my dressing-roome,
 And dress to me my hair;
 Whaireir yee laid a plait before 55
 See yee lay ten times mair.
15. "My maids, gae to my dressing-room,
 And dress to me my smock;
 The one half is o the holland ² fine,
 The other o needle-work." 60
16. The horse Fair Annet rade upon,
 He amblit like the wind;
 Wi siller he was shod before,
 Wi burning gowd behind.
17. Four and twanty siller bells 65
 Wer a' tyed till his mane,
 And yae tift ³ o the norland wind,
 They tinkled ane by ane.
18. Four and twanty gay gude knichts
 Rade by Fair Annet's side, 70
 And four and twanty fair ladies,
 As gin she had bin a bride.
19. And whan she cam to Marie's kirk,
 She sat on Marie's stean: ⁴
 The cleading ⁵ that Fair Annet had
 on 75
 It skinkled ⁶ in their een.
20. And whan she cam into the kirk,
 She shimmerd like the sun;
 The belt that was about her waist
 Was a' wi pearles bedone. 80
21. She sat her by the nut-browne bride,
 And her een they wer sae clear,
 Lord Thomas he clean forgat the bride,
 Whan Fair Annet drew near.
22. He had a rose into his hand, 85
 He gae it kisses three,
 And reaching by the nut-browne bride,
 Laid it on Fair Annet's knee.
23. Up than spak the nut-browne bride,
 She spak wi meikle spite: 90
 "And whair gat ye that rose-water,
 That does mak yee sae white?"
24. "O I did get the rose-water
 Whair ye wull neir get nane,
 For I did get that very rose-water 95
 Into my mither's wame." ¹
25. The bride she drew a long bodkin
 Frae out her gay head-gear,
 And strake Fair Annet unto the heart,
 That word spak nevir mair. 100
26. Lord Thomas he saw Fair Annet wex
 pale,
 And marvelit what mote bee;
 But whan he saw her dear heart's blude,
 A' wood-wroth ² wexed hee.
27. He drew his dagger, that was sae
 sharp, 105
 That was sae sharp and meet, ³
 And drave it into the nut-browne bride,
 That fell deid at his feit.
28. "Now stay for me, dear Annet," he sed,
 "Now stay, my dear," he cry'd; 110
 Then strake the dagger untill his heart,
 And fell deid by her side.
29. Lord Thomas was buried without
 kirkwa, ⁴
 Fair Annet within the quiere,
 And o the tane thair grew a birk, ⁵ 115
 The other a bonny briere.
30. And ay they grew, and ay they threw, ⁶
 As they wad faine be neare;

¹ finery.
⁴ stone.

² linen.
⁵ clothing.

³ one whiff.
⁶ sparkled.

¹ womb. ² mad with anger. ³ straight.
⁴ As a suicide, he could not be buried in holy ground.
⁵ birch. ⁶ twisted.

And by this ye may ken right weil
They were twa luvvers deare.

120

LAMKIN

1. It's Lamkin was a mason good
as ever built wi stane;
He built Lord Wearie's castle,
but payment got he nane.
2. "O pay me, Lord Wearie,
come, pay me my fee:"
"I canna pay you, Lamkin,
for I maun ¹ gang oer the sea."
3. "O pay me now, Lord Wearie,
come, pay me out o hand:"
"I canna pay you, Lamkin,
unless I sell my land."
4. "O gin ye winna pay me,
I here sall mak a vow,
Before that ye come hame again,
ye sall hae cause to rue."
5. Lord Wearie got a bonny ship,
to sail the saut sea faem;
Bade his lady weel the castle keep,
ay till he should come hame.
6. But the nourice ² was a fause limmer ³
as eer hung on a tree;
She laid a plot wi Lamkin,
whan her lord was oer the sea.
7. She laid a plot wi Lamkin,
when the servants were awa,
Loot him in at a little shot-window,
and brought him to the ha.
8. "O whare's a' the men o this house,
that ca me Lamkin?"
"They're at the barn-well thrashing;
'twill be lang ere they come in."
9. "And whare's the women o this house,
that ca me Lamkin?"
"They're at the far well washing;
'twill be lang ere they come in."
10. "And whare's the bairns o this house,
that ca me Lamkin?"
"They're at the school reading;
'twill be night or they come hame."
11. "O whare's the lady o this house,
that ca's me Lamkin?"

1 must.

2 nurse.

3 rascal.

"She's up in her bower sewing,
but we soon can bring her down."

12. Then Lamkin's tane a sharp knife,
that hang down by his gaire,¹
And he has gien the bonny babe
a deep wound and a sair.
13. Then Lamkin he rocked,
and the fause nourice sang,
Till frae ilkae bore ² o the cradle
the red blood out sprang.
14. Then out it spak the lady,
as she stood on the stair:
"What ails my bairn, nourice,
that he's greeting ³ sae sair?"
15. O still my bairn nourice,
O still him with the pap!"
"He winna still, lady,
for this nor for that."
16. "O still my bairn, nourice,
O still him wi the wand!"
"He winna still, lady,
for a' his father's land."
17. "O still my bairn, nourice,
O still him wi the bell!"
"He winna still, lady,
till ye come down yoursel."
18. O the firsten step she steppit,
she steppit on a stane;
But the neisten step she steppit,
she met him Lamkin.
19. "O mercy, mercy, Lamkin,
hae mercy upon me!
Though you've taen my young son's life,⁷⁵
ye may let mysel be."
20. "O sall I kill her, nourice,
or sall I lat her be?"
"O kill her, kill her, Lamkin,
for she neer was good to me."
21. "O scour the bason, nourice,
and mak it fair and clean,
For to keep this lady's heart's blood,
for she's come o noble kin."
22. "There need nae bason, Lamkin,
lat it run through the floor;
What better is the heart's blood
o the rich than o the poor?"

1 gore.

2 hole.

3 crying.

23. But ere three months were at an end,
Lord Wearie came again;
But dowie,¹ dowie was his heart
when first he came hame. 90
24. "O wha's blood is this," he says,
"that lies in the chamer?"²
"It is your lady's heart's blood;
'tis as clear as the lamer."³ 95
25. "And wha's blood is this," he says,
"that lies in my ha?"
"It is your young son's heart's blood;
'tis the clearest ava."⁴ 100
26. O sweetly sang the black-bird
that sat upon the tree;
But sairer grat⁵ Lamkin,
when he was condemnd to die.
27. And bonny sang the mavis,⁶
out o the thorny brake;
But sairer grat the nourice,
when she was tied to the stake. 105

THE GAY GOSS-HAWK

1. "O well's me o my gay goss-hawk,
That he can speak and flee;
He'll carry a letter to my love,
Bring back another to me."
2. "O how can I your true-love ken,
Or how can I her know?
Whan frae her mouth I never heard
couth,⁷
Nor wi my eyes her saw." 5
3. "O well sal ye my true-love ken,
As soon as you her see;
For, of a' the flows in fair Englan,
The fairest flouir is she. 10
4. "At even at my love's bowr-door
There grows a bowing birk,⁸
An sit ye down and sing thereon,
As she gang's to the kirk. 15
5. "An four-and-twenty ladies fair
Will wash and go to kirk,
But well sal ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her skirt. 20
6. "An four and twenty gay ladies
Will to the mass repair,
- But well sal ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her hair." 25
7. O even at that lady's bowr-door
There grows a bowin birk,
An he set down and sang thereon,
As she ged to the kirk. 25
8. "O eet and drink, my marys¹ a',
The wine flows you among,
Till I gang to my shot-window,
An hear yon bonny bird's song. 30
9. "Sing on, sing on, my bonny bird,
The song ye sang the streen,²
For I ken by your sweet singin
You're frae my true-love sen." 35
10. O first he sang a merry song,
An then he sang a grave,
An then he peckd his feathers gray,
To her the letter gave. 40
11. "Ha, there's a letter frae your love,
He says he sent you three;
He canna wait your love langer,
But for your sake he'll die.
12. "He bids you write a letter to him; 45
He says he's sent you five;
He canna wait your love langer,
Tho you're the fairest woman alive."
13. "Ye bid him bake his bridal-bread,
And brew his bridal-ale, 50
An I'll meet him in fair Scotlan
Lang, lang or it be stale."
14. She's doen her to her father dear,
Fa'n low down on her knee:
"A boon, a boon, my father dear,
I pray you, grant it me." 55
15. "Ask on, ask on, my daughter,
An granted it sal be;
Except ae squire in fair Scotlan,
An him you sall never see." 60
16. "The only boon, my father dear,
That I do crave of the,
Is, gin I die in southin lands,
In Scotland to bury me.
17. "An the firstin kirk that ye come till, 65
Ye gar³ the bells be rung,
An the nextin kirk that ye come till,
Ye gar the mess be sung.

1 sad. 2 chamber. 3 amber. 4 of all.
5 wept. 6 thrush. 7 sound, word. 8 birk.

1 maids 2 yesterday evening. 3 cause.

18. "An the thiridin kirk that ye come till,
You deal gold for my sake, ⁷⁰
An the fourthin kirk that ye come till,
You tarry there till night."
19. She is doen her to her bigly ¹ bowr,
As fast as she coud fare,
An she has tane a sleepy draught, ⁷⁵
That she had mixed wi care.
20. She's laid her down upon her bed,
An soon she's fa'n asleep,
And soon oer every tender limb ⁸⁰
Cauld death began to creep.
21. Whan night was floun, an day was come,
Nae ane that did her see
But thought she was as surely dead
As any lady coud be.
22. Her father an her brothers dear ⁸⁵
Gard make to her a bier;
The tae half was o guide red gold,
The tither o silver clear.
23. Her mither an her sisters fair
Gard work for her a sark; ² ⁹⁰
The tae half was o cambrick fine,
The tither o needle wark.
24. The firstin kirk that they came till,
They gard the bells be rung,
An the nextin kirk that they came ⁹⁵
till,
They gard the mess be sung.
25. The thiridin kirk that they came till,
They dealt gold for her sake,
An the fourthin kirk that they came till,
Lo, there they met her make! ³ ¹⁰⁰
26. "Lay down, lay down the bigly bier.
Lat me the dead look on;"
Wi cherry cheeks and ruby lips
She lay an smil'd on him.
27. "O ae sheave ⁴ o your bread, true-
love, ¹⁰⁵
An ae glass o your wine,
For I hae fasted for your sake
These fully days is nine.
28. "Gang hame, gang hame, my seven bold
brothers,
Gang hame and sound your horn; ¹¹⁰
An ye may boast in southin lans
Your sister's playd you scorn."

1 commodious. 2 shirt. 3 lover. 4 slice.

THE THREE RAVENS

1. There were three ravens sat on a tree,
Downe a downe, hay down, hay
downe
There were three ravens sat on a tree,
With a downe
There were three ravens sat on a tree, ⁵
They were as blacke as they might be.
With a downe derrie, derrie, derrie,
downe, downe.
2. The one of them said to his mate,
"Where shall we our breakefast take?"
3. "Downe in yonder greene field, ¹⁰
There lies a knight slain under his shield.
4. "His hounds they lie downe at his feete,
So well they can their master keepe.
5. "His haukes they flie so eagerly,
There's no fowle dare him come nie." ¹⁵
6. Downe there comes a fallow doe,
As great with yong as she might goe.
7. She lift up his bloody hed,
And kist his wounds that were so red.
8. She got him up upon her backe, ²⁰
And carried him to earthen lake ¹
9. She buried him before the prime,
She was dead herselfe ere even-song
time.
10. God send every gentleman,
Such haukes, such hounds, and such a
leman. ² ²⁵

THE TWA CORBIES

1. As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies ³ making a mane; ⁴
The tane unto the t' other say,
"Where sall we gang and dine to-day?"
2. "In behint yon auld fail ⁵ dyke, ⁵
I wot there lies a new slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.
3. "His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame, ¹⁰

1 pit. 2 sweetheart. 3 ravens.
4 moan. 5 turf.

His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

4. "Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,¹
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een;
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair 15
We'll theek² our nest when it grows bare.

5. "Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;
Oer his white banes when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair." 20

SIR PATRICK SPENCE

1. The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
"O whar will I get a guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?"

2. Up and spak an eldern knight, 5
Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the se."

3. The king has written a braid³ letter,
And signd it wi his hand, 10
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.

4. The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch⁴ lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red, 15
The teir blinded his ee.

5. "O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
To sail upon the se!" 20

6. "Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne:"
"O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

7. "Late late yestreen I saw the new
moone, 25
Wi the auld moone in her arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme."

8. O our Scots nobles wer richt laith⁵
To weet their cork-heild schoone; 30
Bot lang owre⁶ a' the play wer playd,
Their hats they swam aboone.⁷

1 neck-bone. 2 thatch. 3 broad.
4 laugh. 5 loath. 6 before. 7 above.

9. O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence 35
Cum sailing to the land.

10. O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems¹ in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair. 40

11. Haf owre, half owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

1. There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them oer the sea.

2. They hadna been a week from her, 5
A week but barely ane,
Whan word came to the carline wife²
That her three sons were gane.

3. They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three, 10
Whan word came to the carlin wife
That her sons she'd never see.

4. "I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes³ in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me, 15
In earthly flesh and blood."

5. It fell about the Martinmass,⁴
When nights are lang and mirk,⁵
The carlin wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o the birk.⁶ 20

6. It neither grew in syke⁷ nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;⁸
But at the gates o Paradise,
That birk grew fair enough.

7. "Blow up the fire, my maidens, 25
Bring water from the well;
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

8. And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide, 30

1 combs. 2 old woman. 3 troubles.
4 November 11. 5 dark. 6 birch.
7 trench. 8 furrow.

And she's taen her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

9. Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the gray;
The eldest to the youngest said, 35
"Tis time we were away."
10. The cock he hadna crawd but once,
And clappd his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
"Brother, we must awa. 40
11. "The cock doth crawl, the day doth daw,
The channerin' 1 worm doth chide;
Gin we be mist out o our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.
12. "Fare ye weel, my mother dear! 45
Fareweel to barn and byre! 2
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!"

THE DÆMON LOVER

1. "O where have you been, my long, long
love,
This long seven years and mair?"
"O I'm come to seek my former vows
Ye granted me before."
2. "O hold your tongue of your former
vows, 5
For they will breed sad strife;
O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For I am become a wife."
3. He turned him right and round about,
And the tear blinded his ee: 10
"I wad never hae trodden on Irish
ground,
If it had not been for thee.
4. "I might hae had a king's daughter,
Far, far beyond the sea;
I might have had a king's daughter, 15
Had it not been for love o thee."
5. "If ye might have had a king's daughter,
Yersel ye had to blame;
Ye might have taken the king's daugh-
ter,
For ye kend that I was nane. 20
6. "If I was to leave my husband dear,
And my two babes also,

O what have you to take me to,
If with you I should go?"

7. "I hae seven ships upon the sea — 25
The eighth brought me to land —
With four-and-twenty bold mariners,
And music on every hand."
8. She has taken up her two little babes,
Kissd them baith cheek and chin: 30
"O fair ye weel, my ain two babes,
For I'll never see you again."
9. She set her foot upon the ship,
No mariners could she behold;
But the sails were o the taffetie, 35
And the masts o the beaten gold.
10. She had not saild a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When dismal grew his countenance,
And drumlie 1 grew his ee. 40
11. They had not saild a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
And she wept right bitterlie.
12. "O hold your tongue of your weeping,"
says he, 45
"Of your weeping now let me be;
I will shew you how the lilies grow
On the banks of Italy."
13. "O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
That the sun shines sweetly on?" 50
"O yon are the hills of heaven," he said,
"Where you will never win."
14. "O whaten a mountain is yon," she said,
"All so dreary wi frost and snow?"
"O yon is the mountain of hell," he
cried, 55
"Where you and I will go."
15. He strack the tap-mast wi his hand,
The fore-mast wi his knee,
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
And sank her in the sea. 60

HUGH OF LINCOLN

1. Four and twenty bonny boys
Were playing at the ba,
And by it came him sweet Sir Hugh,
And he playd oer them a'.

1 grumbling.

2 cow-barn.

1 gloomy.

2. He kicked the ba with his right foot, 5
And catchd it wi his knee,
And throuch-and-thro the Jew's window
He gard ¹ the bonny ba flee.
3. He's doen him to the Jew's castell,
And walkd it round about; 10
And there he saw the Jew's daughter,
At the window looking out.
4. "Throw down the ba, ye Jew's daughter,
Throw down the ba to me!"
"Never a bit," says the Jew's daugh-
ter, 15
"Till up to me come ye."
5. "How will I come up? How can I come
up?
How can I come to thee?
For as ye did to my auld father,
The same ye'll do to me." 20
6. She's gane till her father's garden,
And pu'd an apple red and green;
'Twas a' to wyle him sweet Sir Hugh,
And to entice him in.
7. She's led him in through ae dark door, 25
And sae has she thro nine;
She's laid him on a dressing-table,
And stickit him like a swine.
8. And first came out the thick, thick blood,
And syne ² came out the thin, 30
And syne came out the bonny heart's
blood;
There was nae mair within.
9. She's rowd ³ him in a cake o lead,
Bade him lie still and sleep;
She's thrown him in Our Lady's draw-
well, 35
Was fifty fathom deep.
10. When bells were rung, and mass was
sung,
And a' the bairns came hame,
When every lady gat hame her son,
The Lady Maisry gat nane. 40
11. She's taen her mantle her about,
Her coffer by the hand,
And she's gane out to seek her son,
And wanderd oer the land.
12. She's doen her to the Jew's castell, 45
Where a' were fast asleep:
13. She's doen her to the Jew's garden,
Thought he had been gathering
fruit: 50
"Gin ye be there, my sweet Sir Hugh,
I pray you to me speak."
14. She neard Our Lady's deep draw-well,
Was fifty fathom deep:
"Whareer ye be, my sweet Sir Hugh, 55
I pray you to me speak."
15. "Gae hame, gae hame, my mither dear,
Prepare my winding sheet,
And at the back o merry Lincoln
The morn ¹ I will you meet." 60
16. Now Lady Maisry is gane hame,
Made him a winding sheet,
And at the back o merry Lincoln
The dead corpse did her meet.
17. And a' the bells o merry Lincoln 65
Without men's hands were rung,
And a' the books o merry Lincoln
Were read without man's tongue,
And neer was such a burial
Sin Adam's days begun. 70

CHEVY CHASE

1. God prosper long our noble king,
our liffes and saftyes all!
A woefull hunting once there did
in Chevy Chase befall.
2. To drive the deere with hound and
horne 5
Erle Percy took the way:
The child may rue that is unborne
the hunting of that day!
3. The stout Erle of Northumberland
a vow to God did make 10
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
three sommers days to take,
4. The cheefest harts in Chevy C[h]ase
to kill and beare away:
These tydings to Erle Douglas came 15
in Scotland, where he lay.
5. Who sent Erle Percy present word
he would prevent his sport;

1 made. 2 then. 3 rolled.

1 to-morrow.

- The English erle, not fearing that,
did to the woods resort, 20
6. With fifteen hundred bowmen bold,
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of neede
to ayme their shafts arright.
7. The gallant greyhound[s] swiftly ran 25
to chase the fallow deere;
On Munday they began to hunt,
ere daylight did appeare.
8. And long before high noone the¹ had
a hundred fat buckes slaine; 30
Then having dined, the drovyers went
to rouze the deare againe.
9. The bowmen mustered on the hills,
well able to endure;
Theire backsids all with speciall care 35
that day were guarded sure.
10. The hounds ran swiftly through the woods
the nimble deere to take,
That with their cryes the hills and dales
an eccho shrill did make. 40
11. Lord Percy to the querry went
to view the tender deere;
Quoth he, "Erle Douglas promised once
this day to meete me heere;
12. "But if I thought he wold not come, 45
noe longer wold I stay."
With that a brave young gentlman
thus to the erle did say:
13. "Loe, yonder doth Erle Douglas come,
hys men in armour bright; 50
Full twenty hundred Scottish speres
all marching in our sight.
14. "All men of pleasant Tivydale,
fast by the river Tweede:"
"O ceaze your sportts!" Erle Percy said,
"and take your bowes with speede. 56
15. "And now with me, my countrymen,
your courage forth advance!
For there was never champion yett,
in Scotland nor in Ffrance, 60
16. "That ever did on horsbacke come,
[but], and if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
with him to break a spere."
17. Erle Douglas on his milke-white steede, 65
most like a baron bold,
Rode formost of his company,
whose armor shone like gold.
18. "Shew me," sayd hee, "whose men you
bee
that hunt soe boldly heere, 70
That without my consent doe chase
and kill my fallow deere."
19. The first man that did answer make
was noble Percy hee,
Who sayd, "Wee list not to declare 75
nor shew whose men wee bee;
20. "Yett wee will spend our deerest blood
thy cheefest harts to slay."
Then Douglas swore a solempne oathe,
and thus in rage did say: 80
21. "Ere thus I will outbraved bee,
one of us tow shall dye;
I know thee well, an erle thou art;
Lord Percy, soe am I.
22. "But trust me, Percye, pittye it
were, 85
and great offence, to kill
Then any of these our guiltlesse men,
for they have done none ill.
23. "Let thou and I the battell trye,
and set our men aside;" 90
"Accurst bee [he!]" Erle Percye sayd,
"by whome it is denyed."
24. Then stept a gallant squire forth —
Witherington was his name —
Who said, "I wold not have it told 95
To Henery our king, for shame,
25. "That ere my captaine fought on
foote,
and I stand looking on.
You bee two Erles," quoth Withering-
ton, 100
"and I a squier alone;
26. "I'le doe the best that doe I may,
while I have power to stand;
While I have power to weeld my sword,
I'le fight with hart and hand."
27. Our English archers bent thier bowes; 105
their harts were good and trew;
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
full foure score Scotts the slew.

28. To drive the deere with hound and
horne,
Douglas bade on the bent; 110
Two captaines moved with mickle might,
their speres to shivers went.
29. They closed full fast on everye side,
noe slacknes there was found,
But many a gallant gentleman 115
lay gasping on the ground.
30. O Christ! it was great greeve to see
how eche man chose his spere,
And how the blood out of their breasts
did gush like water cleare. 120
31. At last these two stout erles did meet,
like captaines of great might;
Like lyons woode¹ they layd on lode;²
the made a cruell fight.
32. The fought untill they both did sweat, 125
with swords of tempered steele,
Till blood downe their cheekes like
raine
the trickling downe did feele.
33. "O yeeld thee, Pearcy!" Douglas sayd,
"And in faith I will thee bringe 130
Where thou shall high advanced bee
by James our Scottissh king.
34. "Thy ransome I will freely give,
and this report of thee,
Thou art the most couragious knight 135
[that ever I did see.]"
35. "Noe, Douglas!" quoth Erle Percy then,
"thy profer I doe scorne;
I will not yeelede to any Scott
that ever yett was borne!" 140
36. With that there came an arrow keene,
out of an English bow,
Which stroke Erle Douglas on the brest
a deepe and deadliye blow.
37. Who never sayd more words than
these; 145
"Fight on, my merry men all!
For why, my life is att [an] end,
lord Pearcy sees my fall."
38. Then leaving liffe, Erle Pearcy tooke
the dead man by the hand; 150
Who said, "Erle Dowglas, for thy life,
wold I had lost my land!
39. "O Christ! my very hart doth bleed
for sorrow for thy sake,
For sure, a more redoubted knight 155
mischance cold never take."
40. A knight amongst the Scotts there was
which saw Erle Douglas dye,
Who streight in hart did vow revenge
upon the Lord Pearcy. 160
41. Sir Hugh Mountgomerye was he called,
who, with a spere full bright,
Well mounted on a gallant steed,
ran feirly through the fight,
42. And past the English archers all, 165
without all dread or feare,
And through Erle Percyes body then
he thrust his hatfull spere.
43. With such a vehement force and might
his body he did gore, 170
The staff ran through the other side
a large cloth-yard and more.
44. Thus did both those nobles dye,
whose courage none cold staine;
An English archer then perceived 175
the noble erle was slaine.
45. He had [a] good bow in his hand,
made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
to the hard head haled hee. 180
46. Against Sir Hugh Mountgomerye
his shaft full right he sett;
The grey-goose-winge that was there-on
in his harts bloode was wett.
47. This fight from breake of day did last 185
till setting of the sun,
For when the rung the evening-bell
the battele scarce was done.
48. With stout Erle Percy there was slaine
Sir John of Egerton, 190
Sir Robert Harcliffe and Sir William,
Sir James, that bold barron.
49. And with Sir George and Sir James,
both knights of good account,
Good Sir Raphe Rebbye there was
slaine, 195
whose prowesse did surmount.
50. For Witherington needs must I wayle
as one in dolefull dumes,

- For when his leggs were smitten of,
he fought upon his stumpes. 200
51. And with Erle Dowglas there was slaine
Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
And Sir Charles Morrell, that from feelde
one foote wold never flee;
52. Sir Roger Hever of Harcliffe tow, 205
his sisters sonne was hee;
Sir David Lambwell, well esteemed,
but saved he cold not bee.
53. And the Lord Maxwell, in like case,
with Douglas he did dye; 210
Of twenty hundred Scottish speeres,
scarce fifty-five did flye.
54. Of fifteen hundred Englishmen
went home but fifty-three;
The rest in Chevy Chase were slaine, 215
under the greenwoode tree.
55. Next day did many widdowes come
their husbands to bewaile;
They washt their wounds in brinish
teares,
but all wold not prevaile. 220
56. Theyr bodyes, bathed in purple blood,
the bore with them away;
They kist them dead a thousand times
ere the were cladd in clay.
57. The newes was brought to Eddenbor-
row, 225
where Scottlands king did rayne,
That brave Erle Douglas soddainlye
was with an arrow slaine.
58. "O heavy newes!" King James' can
say;
"Scotland may wittnesse bee 230
I have not any captaine more
of such account as hee."
59. Like tydings to King Henery came,
within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland 235
was slaine in Chevy Chase.
60. "Now God be with him!" said our king,
"sith it will noe better bee;
I trust I have within my realme
five hundred as good as hee. 240
61. "Yett shall not Scotts nor Scotland say
but I will vengeance take,
- And be revenged on them all
for brave Erle Percyes sake."
62. This vow the king did well performe 245
after on Humble-downe;
In one day fifty knights were slayne,
with lords of great renowne.
63. And of the rest, of small account,
did many hundreds dye: 250
Thus endeth the hunting in Chevy
Chase,
made by the Erle Pearcy.
64. God save our king, and blesse this land
with plentye, joy, and peace,
And grant hencforth that foule debate
twixt noble men may ceaze! 256

ROBIN HOOD RESCUING THE WIDOW'S THREE SONS

1. There are twelve months in all the
year
As I hear many men say,
But the merriest month in all the year.
Is the merry month of May.
2. Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day, 6
And there he met a silly old woman,
Was weeping on the way.
3. "What news? what news, thou silly old
woman?
What news hast thou for me?" 10
Said she, "There's three squires in Not-
tingham town
To-day is condemned to die."
4. "O have they parishes burnt?" he said,
"Or have they ministers slain?
Or have they robbed any virgin, 15
Or with other men's wives have lain?"
5. "They have no parishes burnt, good sir,
Nor yet have ministers slain,
Nor have they robbed any virgin,
Nor with other men's wives have
lain." 20
6. "O what have they done?" said bold
Robin Hood,
"I pray thee tell to me":
"It's for slaying of the king's fallow
deer,
Bearing their long bows with thee."

7. "Dost thou not mind, old woman," he
said, 25
"Since thou made me sup and dine?
By the truth of my body," quoth bold
Robin Hood,
"You could not tell it in better time."
8. Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day, 30
And there he met with a silly old palmer,
Was walking along the highway.
9. "What news? what news, thou silly old
man?
What news, I do thee pray?"
Said he, "Three squires in Nottingham
town 35
Are condemnd to die this day."
10. "Come change thy apparel with me, old
man,
Come change thy apparel for mine;
Here is forty shillings in good silver,
Go drink it in beer or wine." 40
11. "O thine apparel is good," he said,
"And mine is ragged and torn;
Wherever you go, wherever you ride,
Laugh neer an old man to scorn."
12. "Come change thy apparel with me, old
churl, 45
Come change thy apparel with mine;
Here are twenty pieces of good broad
gold,
Go feast thy brethren with wine."
13. Then he put on the old man's hat,
It stood full high on the crown: 50
"The first bold bargain that I come at,
It shall make thee come down."
14. Then he put on the old man's cloak,
Was patchd black, blew, and red;
He thought no shame all the day long 55
To wear the bags of bread.
15. Then he put on the old man's breeks,¹
Was patchd from ballup² to side;
"By the truth of my body," bold Robin
can say,
"This man lov'd little pride." 60
16. Then he put on the old man's hose,
Were patchd from knee to wrist;
"By the truth of my body," said bold
Robin Hood,
"I'd laugh if I had any list."³
17. Then he put on the old man's shoes, 65
Were patchd both beneath and aboon;
Then Robin Hood swore a solemn oath,
"It's good habit that makes a man."
18. Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a down, 70
And there he met with the proud sheriff,
Was walking along the town.
19. "O save, O save, O sheriff," he said,
"O save, and you may see!
And what will you give to a silly old
man 75
To-day will your hangman be?"
20. "Some suits, some suits," the sheriff he
said,
"Some suits I'll give to thee;
Some suits, some suits, and pence thir-
teen
To-day's a hangman's fee." 80
21. Then Robin he turns him round about,
And jumps from stock to stone;
"By the truth of my body," the sheriff
he said,
"That's well jumpt, thou nimble old
man."
22. "I was neer a hangman in all my life, 85
Nor yet intends to trade;
But curst be he," said bold Robin,
"That first a hangman was made."
23. "I've a bag for meal, and a bag for malt,
And a bag for barley and corn; 90
A bag for bread, and a bag for beef,
And a bag for my little small horn."
24. "I have a horn in my pocket,
I got it from Robin Hood,
And still when I set it to my mouth, 95
For thee it blows little good."
25. "O wind thy horn, thou proud fellow,
Of thee I have no doubt;¹
I wish that thou give such a blast
Till both thy eyes fall out." 100
26. The first loud blast that he did blow,
He blew both loud and shrill;
A hundred and fifty of Robin Hood's
men
Came riding over the hill.
27. The next loud blast that he did give, 105
He blew both loud and amain,

1 breeches. 2 front flap. 3 inclination.

1 fear.

And quickly sixty of Robin Hood's men
Came shining over the plain.

28. "O who are yon," the sheriff he said,
"Come tripping over the lee?" ¹¹⁰
"The're my attendants," brave Robin
did say,
"They'll pay a visit to thee."
29. They took the gallows from the slack,¹
They set it in the glen,
They hangd the proud sheriff on
that, ¹¹⁵
Releasd their own three men.

ROBIN HOOD'S DEATH AND BURIAL

1. When Robin Hood and Little John
Down a down a down a down
Went oer yon bank of broom,
Said Robin Hood bold to Little John,
"We have shot for many a pound." ⁵
Hey down, a down, a down.
2. "But I am not able to shoot one shot
more,
My broad arrows will not flee;
But I have a cousin lives down below,
Please God, she will bleed me." ¹⁰
3. Now Robin he is to fair Kirkly gone,
As fast as he can win;²
But before he came there, as we do hear,
He was taken very ill.
4. And when he came to fair Kirkly hall, ¹⁵
He knockd all at the ring,
But none was so ready as his cousin
herself
For to let bold Robin in.
5. "Will you please to sit down, cousin
Robin," she said,
"And drink some beer with me?" ²⁰
"No, I will neither eat nor drink,
Till I am blooded by thee."
6. "Well, I have a room, cousin Robin,"
she said,
"Which you did never see,
And if you please to walk therein, ²⁵
You blooded by me shall be."
7. She took him by the lily-white hand,
And led him to a private room,
¹ low ground. ² arrive.

And there she blooded bold Robin Hood,
While one drop of blood would run
down. ³⁰

8. She blooded him in a vein of the arm,
And locked him up in the room;
Then did he bleed all the live-long day,
Until the next day at noon.
9. He then bethought him of a casement
there, ³⁵
Thinking for to get down;
But was so weak he could not leap,
He could not get him down.
10. He then bethought him of his bugle-
horn,
Which hung low down to his knee; ⁴⁰
He set his horn unto his mouth,
And blew out weak blasts three.
11. Then Little John, when hearing him,
As he sat under a tree,
"I fear my master is now near dead, ⁴⁵
He blows so wearily."
12. Then Little John to fair Kirkly is gone,
As fast as he can dree;¹
But when he came to Kirkly-hall,
He broke locks two or three: ⁵⁰
13. Until he came bold Robin to see,
Then he fell on his knee;
"A boon, a boon," cries Little John,
"Master, I beg of thee."
14. "What is that boon," said Robin
Hood, ⁵⁵
"Little John, [thou] begs of me?"
"It is to burn fair Kirkly-hall,
And all their nunnery."
15. "Now nay, now nay," quoth Robin
Hood,
"That boon I'll not grant thee; ⁶⁰
I never hurt woman in all my life,
Nor men in woman's company."
16. "I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at mine end shall it be;
But give me my bent bow in my hand, ⁶⁵
And a broad arrow I'll let flee;
And where this arrow is taken up,
There shall my grave digged be.
17. "Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet; ⁷⁰
¹ endure, manage.

- And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet;
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.
18. "Let me have length and breadth
enough, 75
With a green sod under my head;
That they may say, when I am dead
Here lies bold Robin Hood."
19. These words they readily granted him,
Which did bold Robin please: 80
And there they buried bold Robin Hood,
Within the fair Kirkleys.
- MARY HAMILTON
1. Word's gane to the kitchen,
And word's gane to the ha,
That Marie Hamilton gangs wi bairn¹
To the hichest Stewart of a'.
2. He's courted her in the kitchen, 5
He's courted her in the ha,
He's courted her in the laigh² cellar,
And that was warst of a'.
3. She's tyed it in her apron
And she's thrown it in the sea; 10
Says, "Sink ye, swim ye, bonny wee
babe!
You'll neer get mair o me."
4. Down then cam the auld queen,
Goud tassels tying her hair:
"O Marie, where's the bonny wee
babe 15
That I heard greet sae sair?"
5. "There was never a babe intill my
room,
As little designs to be;
It was but a touch o my sair side,
Come oer my fair bodie." 20
6. "O Marie, put on your robes o black,
Or else your robes o brown,
For ye maun gang wi me the night,
To see fair Edinbro town."
7. "I winna put on my robes o black, 25
Nor yet my robes o brown;
But I'll put on my robes o white,
To shine through Edinbro town."
8. When she gaed up the Cannogate,
She laughd loud laughters three; 30
But whan she cam down the Cannogate
The tear blinded her ee.
9. When she gaed up the Parliament stair,
The heel cam aff her shее;
And lang or she cam down again 35
She was condemnd to dee.
10. When she cam down the Cannogate,
The Cannogate sae free,
Many a ladie lookd oer her window,
Weeping for this ladie. 40
11. "Ye need nae weep for me," she says,
"Ye need nae weep for me;
For had I not slain mine own sweet babe,
This death I wadna dee.
12. "Bring me a bottle of wine," she says, 45
"The best that eer ye hae,
That I may drink to my weil-wishers,
And they may drink to me.
13. "Here's a health to the jolly sailors,
That sail upon the main; 50
Let them never let on to my father and
mother
But what I'm coming hame.
14. "Here's a health to the jolly sailors,
That sail upon the sea;
Let them never let on to my father and
mother 55
That I cam here to dee.
15. "Oh little did my mother think,
The day she cradled me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee. 60
16. "Oh little did my father think,
The day he held up me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee.
17. "Last night I washd the queen's feet, 65
And gently laid her down;
And a' the thanks I've gotten the nicht
To be hangd in Edinbro town!
18. "Last nicht there was four Maries,
The nicht there'll be but three; 70
There was Marie Seton, and Marie
Beton,
And Marie Carmichael, and me."

¹ is with child.² low.

SIR THOMAS MALORY

Of Sir Thomas Malory we know very little. He is probably to be identified with a knight of that name who was born early in the fifteenth century, served in France under the earl of Warwick, and was member of Parliament for Warwickshire in 1445. He tells us himself at the conclusion of *Morte Darthur*, that the book was "ended the ninth year of the reign of king Edward the Fourth," i.e. 1469-70. In the course of the work he frequently refers to a "French book" as his authority. The *Morte Darthur*, which tells the adventures of Arthur from his birth to his death, is a compilation from a great mass of Old French romances of King Arthur and his Round Table. Whether Malory made the compilation himself, or merely translated a French compilation, we do not know. The work was printed by the famous printer William Caxton in 1485, who divided it into twenty-one books. It is the intermediary through which the romances of King Arthur have been most widely known to English readers, and is one of the great masterpieces of our earlier prose — stately, dignified, yet easy and graceful in movement.

The selection here printed — the first seven chapters of Book XXI — contains the account of Arthur's last battle and death. The love of Sir Launcelot for Queen Guenever has been discovered; Launcelot has fled to his castle; Sir Mordred has gathered to himself many of the discontented and has proclaimed himself king.

The authoritative edition is that of Sommer, which reproduces exactly Caxton's text. In the selection here given the spelling is modernized, but the text is not otherwise changed.

LE MORTE DARTHUR

Book XXI

CHAPTER I

How Sir Mordred presumed and took on him to be King of England, and would have married the Queen, his uncle's wife

As Sir Mordred was ruler of all England, he did do make letters as though that they came from beyond the sea, and the letters specified that King Arthur was slain in battle with Sir Launcelot. Wherefore Sir Mordred made a parliament, and called the lords together, and there he made them to choose him king; and so he was crowned at Canterbury, and held a feast there fifteen days; and afterward he drew him unto Winchester, and there he took the Queen Guenever, and said plainly that he would wed her which was his uncle's wife and his father's wife. And so he made ready for the feast, and a day prefixed that they should be wedded; wherefore Queen Guenever was passing heavy. But she durst not discover her heart, but spake fair, and agreed to Sir Mordred's will. Then she desired of Sir Mordred for to go to London, to buy all manner of things that longed unto the wedding. And because of her fair speech Sir Mordred trusted her well enough, and gave her leave to go. And so when she came to London she took the Tower of London, and suddenly in all haste possible she stuffed it with all manner of victual, and well garnished it with men, and so kept it. Then when Sir Mordred wist and understood how he was beguiled, he was passing wroth out of

measure. And a short tale for to make, he went and laid a mighty siege about the Tower of London, and made many great assaults thereat, and threw many great engines unto them, and shot great guns. But all might not prevail Sir Mordred, for Queen Guenever would never for fair speech nor for foul, would never trust to come in his hands again. Then came the Bishop of Canterbury, the which was a noble clerk and an holy man, and thus he said to Sir Mordred: "Sir, what will ye do? will ye first displease God and sithen shame yourself, and all knighthood? Is not King Arthur your uncle, no farther but your mother's brother, and on her himself King Arthur begat you upon his own sister,¹ therefore how may you wed your father's wife?" "Sir," said the noble clerk, "leave this opinion or I shall curse you with book and bell and candle." "Do thou thy worst," said Sir Mordred, "wit thou well I shall defy thee." "Sir," said the Bishop, "and wit you well I shall not fear me to do that me ought to do. Also where ye noise where my lord Arthur is slain, and that is not so, and therefore ye will make a foul work in this land." "Peace, thou false priest," said Sir Mordred, "for an thou chafe me any more I shall make strike off thy head." So the Bishop departed and did the cursing in the most orgulist² wise that might be done. And then Sir Mordred sought the Bishop of Canterbury, for to have slain him. Then the Bishop fled, and took part of his goods with him, and went nigh unto Glaston-

¹ Mordred was the illegitimate son of Arthur. His mother was Arthur's half-sister, a fact of which Arthur was at the time ignorant (Book I, Chap. xvii).

² haughtiest.

bury; and there he was as priest hermit in a chapel, and lived in poverty and in holy prayers, for well he understood that mischievous war was at hand. Then Sir Mordred sought on Queen Guenever by letters and sonds,¹ and by fair means and foul means, for to have her to come out of the Tower of London; but all this availed not, for she answered him shortly, openly and privily, that she had liefer slay herself than to be married with him. Then came word to Sir Mordred that King Arthur had araised the siege for Sir Launcelot, and he was coming homeward with a great host, to be avenged upon Sir Mordred; wherefore Sir Mordred made write writs to all the barony of this land, and much people drew to him. For then was the common voice among them that with Arthur was none other life but war and strife, and with Sir Mordred was great joy and bliss. Thus was Sir Arthur depraved, and evil said of. And many there were that King Arthur had made up of nought, and given them lands, might not then say him a good word. Lo ye all Englishmen, see ye not what a mischief here was! for he that was the most king and knight of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble knights, and by him they were all upholden, now might not these Englishmen hold them content with him. Lo thus was the old custom and usage of this land; and also men say that we of this land have not yet lost nor forgotten that custom and usage. Alas, this is a great default of us Englishmen, for there may no thing please us no term. And so fared the people at that time, they were better pleased with Sir Mordred than they were with King Arthur; and much people drew unto Sir Mordred, and said they would abide with him for better and for worse. And so Sir Mordred drew with a great host to Dover, for there he heard say that Sir Arthur would arrive, and so he thought to beat his own father from his lands; and the most part of all England held with Sir Mordred, the people were so new-fangle.

CHAPTER II

How after that King Arthur had tidings, he returned and came to Dover, where Sir Mordred met him to let his landing; and of the death of Sir Gawaine

And so as Sir Mordred was at Dover with his host, there came King Arthur with a great navy of ships, and galleys, and carracks.

And there was Sir Mordred ready awaiting upon his landing, to let¹ his own father to land upon the land that he was king over. Then there was launching of great boats and small, and full of noble men of arms; and there was much slaughter of gentle knights, and many a full bold baron was laid full low, on both parties. But King Arthur was so courageous that there might no manner of knights let him to land, and his knights fiercely followed him; and so they landed maugre Sir Mordred and all his power, and put Sir Mordred aback, that he fled and all his people. So when this battle was done, King Arthur let bury his people that were dead. And then was noble Sir Gawaine found in a great boat, lying more than half dead. When Sir Arthur wist that Sir Gawaine was laid so low, he went unto him; and there the king made sorrow out of measure, and took Sir Gawaine in his arms, and thrice he there swooned. And then when he awaked, he said: "Alas, Sir Gawaine, my sister's son, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I loved most; and now is my joy gone, for now, my nephew Sir Gawaine, I will discover me unto your person: in Sir Launcelot and you I most had my joy, and mine affiance, and now have I lost my joy of you both; wherefore all mine earthly joy is gone from me." "Mine uncle King Arthur," said Sir Gawaine, "wit you well my death-day is come, and all is through mine own hastiness and wilfulness; for I am smitten upon the old wound the which Sir Launcelot gave me, on the which I feel well I must die; and had Sir Launcelot been with you as he was, this unhappy war had never begun; and of all this am I causer, for Sir Launcelot and his blood, through their prowess, held all your cankered enemies in subjection and daunger. And now," said Sir Gawaine, "ye shall miss Sir Launcelot. But alas, I would not accord with him, and therefore," said Sir Gawaine, "I pray you, fair uncle, that I may have paper, pen, and ink, that I may write to Sir Launcelot a ceddle² with mine own hands." And then when paper and ink was brought, then Gawaine was set up weakly by King Arthur, for he was shriven a little to-fore; and then he wrote thus, as the French book maketh mention: "Unto Sir Launcelot, flower of all noble knights that ever I heard of or saw by my days, I, Sir Gawaine, King Lot's son of Orkney, sister's son unto the noble King Arthur, send thee greeting, and let thee have

¹ messages.

¹ hinder.

² note.

CHAPTER III

How after, Sir Gawaine's ghost appeared to King Arthur, and warned him that he should not fight that day

knowledge that the tenth day of May I was smitten upon the old wound that thou gavest me afore the city of Benwick, and through the same wound that thou gavest me I am come to my death-day. And I will that all the world wit, that I, Sir Gawaine, knight of the Table Round, sought my death, and not through thy deserving, but it was mine own seeking; wherefore I beseech thee, Sir Launcelot, to return again unto this realm, and see my tomb, and pray some prayer more or less for my soul. And this same day that I wrote this cedle, I was hurt to the death in the same wound, the which I had of thy hand, Sir Launcelot; for of a more nobler man might I not be slain. Also Sir Launcelot, for all the love that ever was betwixt us, make no tarrying, but come over the sea in all haste, that thou mayst with thy noble knights rescue that noble king that made thee knight, that is my lord Arthur; for he is full straightly bestad with a false traitor, that is my half-brother, Sir Mordred; and he hath let crown him king, and would have wedded my lady Queen Guenever, and so had he done had she not put herself in the Tower of London. And so the tenth day of May last past, my lord Arthur and we all landed upon them at Dover; and there we put that false traitor, Sir Mordred, to flight, and there it misfortuned me to be stricken upon thy stroke. And at the date of this letter was written, but two hours and a half afore my death, written with mine own hand, and so subscribed with part of my heart's blood. And I require thee, most famous knight of the world, that thou wilt see my tomb." And then Sir Gawaine wept, and King Arthur wept; and then they swooned both. And when they awaked both, the king made Sir Gawaine to receive his Saviour. And then Sir Gawaine prayed the king for to send for Sir Launcelot, and to cherish him above all other knights. And so at the hour of noon Sir Gawaine yielded up the spirit; and then the king let inter him in a chapel within Dover Castle; and there yet all men may see the skull of him, and the same wound is seen that Sir Launcelot gave him in battle. Then was it told the king that Sir Mordred had pight a new field upon Barham Down. And upon the morn the king rode thither to him, and there was a great battle betwixt them, and much people was slain on both parties; but at the last Sir Arthur's party stood best, and Sir Mordred and his party fled unto Canterbury.

And then the king let search all the towns for his knights that were slain, and interred them; and salved them with soft salves that so sore were wounded. Then much people drew unto King Arthur. And then they said that Sir Mordred warred upon King Arthur with wrong. And then King Arthur drew him with his host down by the seaside westward toward Salisbury; and there was a day assigned betwixt King Arthur and Sir Mordred, that they should meet upon a down beside Salisbury, and not far from the seaside; and this day was assigned on a Monday after Trinity Sunday, whereof King Arthur was passing glad, that he might be avenged upon Sir Mordred. Then Sir Mordred araised much people about London, for they of Kent, Southsex, and Surrey, Estsex, and of Southfolk, and of Northfolk, held the most part with Sir Mordred; and many a full noble knight drew unto Sir Mordred and to the king: but they that loved Sir Launcelot drew unto Sir Mordred. So upon Trinity Sunday at night, King Arthur dreamed a wonderful dream, and that was this: that him seemed he sat upon a chaffet¹ in a chair, and the chair was fast to a wheel, and thereupon sat King Arthur in the richest cloth of gold that might be made; and the king thought there was under him, far from him, an hideous deep black water, and therein were all manner of serpents, and worms, and wild beasts, foul and horrible; and suddenly the king thought the wheel turned up-so-down, and he fell among the serpents, and every beast took him by a limb; and then the king cried as he lay in his bed and slept: "Help." And then knights, squires, and yeomen, awaked the king; and then he was so amazed that he wist not where he was; and then he fell on slumbering again, not sleeping nor thoroughly waking. So the king seemed verily that there came Sir Gawaine unto him with a number of fair ladies with him. And when King Arthur saw him, then he said: "Welcome, my sister's son; I weened thou hadst been dead, and now I see thee alive, much am I beholding unto almighty Jesu. O fair nephew and my sister's son, what be these ladies that hither be come with you?" "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "all these be ladies for whom I have foughten when I was man

¹ platform.

² it seemed to the king.

living, and all these are those that I did battle for in righteous quarrel; and God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, because I did battle for them, that they should bring me hither unto you: thus much hath God given me leave, for to warn you of your death; for an ye fight as to-morn with Sir Mordred, as ye both have assigned, doubt ye not ye must be slain, and the most part of your people on both parties. And for the great grace and goodness that almighty Jesu hath unto you, and for pity of you, and many more other good men there shall be slain, God hath sent me to you of his special grace, to give you warning that in no wise ye do battle as to-morn, but that ye take a treaty for a month day; and proffer you largely, so as to-morn to be put in a delay. For within a month shall come Sir Launcelot with all his noble knights, and rescue you worshipfully, and slay Sir Mordred, and all that ever will hold with him." Then Sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished. And anon the king called upon his knights, squires, and yeomen, and charged them wightly ¹ to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him. And when they were come, the king told them his avision, what Sir Gawaine had told him, and warned him that if he fought on the morn he should be slain. Then the king commanded Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, with two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise, an they might, "Take a treaty for a month day with Sir Mordred, and spare not, proffer him lands and goods as much as ye think best." So then they departed, and came to Sir Mordred, where he had a grim host of an hundred thousand men. And there they entreated Sir Mordred long time; and at the last Sir Mordred was agreed for to have Cornwall and Kent, by Arthur's days: after, all England, after the days of King Arthur.

CHAPTER IV

How by misadventure of an adder the battle began, where Mordred was slain, and Arthur hurt to the death

Then were they condescended ² that King Arthur and Sir Mordred should meet betwixt both their hosts, and everich ³ of them should bring fourteen persons; and they came with this word unto Arthur. Then said he: "I am glad that this is done:" and so he went into the field. And when Arthur should depart, he warned all his host that an they

see any sword drawn: "Look ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor, Sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him." In like wise Sir Mordred warned his host that: "An ye see any sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever before you standeth; for in no wise I will not trust for this treaty, for I know well my father will be avenged on me." And so they met as their appointment was, and so they were agreed and accorded thoroughly; and wine was fetched, and they drank. Right soon came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him stung, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the host on both parties saw that sword drawn, then they blew beams, ¹ trumpets, and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together. And King Arthur took his horse, and said: "Alas this unhappy day!" and so rode to his party. And Sir Mordred in like wise. And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land; for there was but rushing and riding, foining and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But ever King Arthur rode through-out the battle of Sir Mordred many times, and did full nobly as a noble king should, and at all times he fainted never; and Sir Mordred that day put him in devoir, and in great peril. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold earth; and ever they fought still till it was near night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the down. Then was Arthur wood ² wroth out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him. Then the king looked about him, and then was he ware, of all his host and of all his good knights, were left no more alive but two knights; that one was Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, and they were full sore wounded. "Jesu mercy," said the king, "where are all my noble knights become?" Alas that ever I should see this doleful day, for now," said Arthur, "I am come to mine end. But would to God that I wist where were that traitor Sir Mordred, that hath caused all this mischief." Then was King Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men. "Now give me my spear," said Arthur

1 swiftly.

2 agreed.

3 each.

1 clarions.

2 mad.

unto Sir Lucan, "for yonder I have espied the traitor that all this woe hath wrought." "Sir, let him be," said Sir Lucan, "for he is unhappy;¹ and if ye pass this unhappy day ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Good lord, remember ye of your night's dream, and what the spirit of Sir Gawaine told you this night, yet God of his great goodness hath preserved you hitherto. Therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave off by this, for blessed be God ye have won the field, for here we be three alive, and with Sir Mordred is none alive; and if ye leave off now, this wicked day of destiny is past." "Tide me death, betide me life," saith the king, "now I see him yonder alone he shall never escape mine hands, for at a better avail shall I never have him." "God speed you well," said Sir Bedivere. Then the king gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying: "Traitor, now is thy death day come." And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran until him with his sword drawn in his hand. And there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin of his spear, throughout the body, more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death wound he thrust himself with the might that he had up to the bur of King Arthur's spear. And right so he smote his father Arthur, with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain-pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth; and the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned oftentimes. And Sir Lucan the Butler and Sir Bedivere oftentimes heaved him up. And so weakly they led him betwixt them both, to a little chapel not far from the seaside. And when the king was there he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field. "Now go thou, Sir Lucan," said the king, "and do me to wit what betokens that noise in the field." So Sir Lucan departed, for he was grievously wounded in many places. And so as he yede,² he saw and hearkened by the moonlight, how that pillers and robbers were come into the field, to pill and to rob many a full noble knight of brooches, and beads, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel; and who that were not dead all out, there they slew them for their harness and their riches. When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the king as soon as he might, and told him all what he had heard

¹ of ill omen to you.

² went.

and seen. "Therefore by my rede," said Sir Lucan, "it is best that we bring you to some town." "I would it were so," said the king.

CHAPTER V

How King Arthur commanded to cast his sword Excalibur into the water, and how he was delivered to ladies in a barge

"But I may not stand, mine head works so. Ah Sir Launcelot," said King Arthur, "this day have I sore missed thee: alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine me warned in my dream." Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting the king swooned; and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, that the part of his guts fell out of his body, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast. And when the king awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan, how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his guts lay at his feet. "Alas," said the king, "this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me, that had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me: now Jesu have mercy upon his soul!" Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. "Leave this mourning and weeping," said the king, "for all this will not avail me, for wit thou well an I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time hieth fast," said the king. "Therefore," said Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, "take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest." "My lord," said Bedivere, "your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again." So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft was all of precious stones; and then he said to himself: "If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss." And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And so, as soon as he might, he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword in the water. "What saw thou there?" said the king. "Sir," he said, "I saw nothing but waves and winds." "That is untruly said of thee," said the king, "therefore go thou lightly again,

and do my commandment; as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in." Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so eft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. "What saw thou there?" said the king. "Sir," he said, "I saw nothing but the waters wap¹ and waves wan." "Ah, traitor untrue," said King Arthur, "now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that, thou that hast been to me so lief and dear? and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the richness of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands; for thou wouldst for my rich sword see me dead." Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side; and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water, as he might; and there came an arm and an hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. "Alas," said the king, "help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long." Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hove a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. "Now put me into the barge," said the king. And so he did softly; and there received him three queens with great mourning; and so they set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head. And then that queen said: "Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? alas, this wound on your head hath caught over-much cold." And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried: "Ah my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies?" "Comfort thyself," said the king, "and do as well as thou may-

¹ ripple.

est, for in me is no trust for to trust in; for I will into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound: and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul." But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest; and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts hoar, of a chapel and an hermitage.

CHAPTER VI

How Sir Bedivere found him on the morrow dead in an hermitage, and how he abode there with the hermit

Then was Sir Bedivere glad, and thither he went; and when he came into the chapel, he saw where lay an hermit grovelling on all four, there fast by a tomb was new graven. When the hermit saw Sir Bedivere he knew him well, for he was but little to-fore Bishop of Canterbury, that Sir Mordred flemed.¹ "Sir," said Bedivere, "what man is there interred that ye pray so fast for?" "Fair son," said the hermit, "I wot not verily, but by deeming. But this night, at midnight, here came a number of ladies, and brought hither a dead corpse, and prayed me to bury him; and here they offered an hundred tapers, and they gave me an hundred besants." "Alas," said Sir Bedivere, "that was my lord King Arthur, that here lieth buried in this chapel." Then Sir Bedivere swooned; and when he awoke he prayed the hermit he might abide with him still there, to live with fasting and prayers. "For from hence will I never go," said Sir Bedivere, "by my will, but all the days of my life here to pray for my lord Arthur." "Ye are welcome to me," said the hermit, "for I know ye better than ye ween that I do. Ye are the bold Bedivere, and the full noble duke, Sir Lucan the Butler, was your brother." Then Sir Bedivere told the hermit all as ye have heard to-fore. So there bode Sir Bedivere with the hermit that was to-fore Bishop of Canterbury, and there Sir Bedivere put upon him poor clothes, and served the hermit full lowly in fasting and in prayers. Thus of Arthur I find never more written in books that be authorised, nor more of the very certainty of his death heard I never read, but thus was he led away in a ship wherein were three queens; that one was King Arthur's sister, Queen Morgan le Fay; the other was the Queen of Northalgis;

¹ put to flight.

the third was the Queen of the Waste Lands. Also there was Nimue, the chief lady of the lake, that had wedded Pelleas the good knight; and this lady had done much for King Arthur, for she would never suffer Sir Pelleas to be in no place where he should be in danger of his life; and so he lived to the uttermost of his days with her in great rest. More of the death of King Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him to his burials; and such one was buried there, that the hermit bare witness that sometime was Bishop of Canterbury, but yet the hermit knew not in certain that he was verily the body of King Arthur: for this tale Sir Bedivere, knight of the Table Round, made it to be written.

CHAPTER VII

Of the opinion of some men of the death of King Arthur; and how Queen Guenever made her a nun in Almesbury

Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall come again,

and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say, here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse: *Hic iacet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rexque futurus.*¹ Thus leave I here Sir Bedivere with the hermit, that dwelled that time in a chapel beside Glastonbury, and there was his hermitage. And so they lived in their prayers, and fastings, and great abstinence. And when Queen Guenever understood that King Arthur was slain, and all the noble knights, Sir Mordred and all the remnant, then the queen stole away, and five ladies with her, and so she went to Almesbury; and there she let make herself a nun, and ware white clothes and black, and great penance she took, as ever did sinful lady in this land, and never creature could make her merry; but lived in fasting, prayers, and alms-deeds, that all manner of people marvelled how virtuously she was changed. Now leave we Queen Guenever in Almesbury, a nun in white clothes and black, and there she was abbess. and ruler as reason would; and turn we from her, and speak we of Sir Launcelot du Lake.

¹ Here lies Arthur, King aforetime, and King to be

THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

The age of Elizabeth is England's Renaissance, appearing about a century later than the Renaissance on the Continent. This revival began in Italy at the close of the Middle Ages, after the Crusades and the fall of Constantinople had brought East and West in contact once more; and men of letters and even courtiers were reminded of the splendor of ancient civilization. The classics, especially Greek, which had been forgotten in western Europe, were studied with renewed eagerness. Through Italy and northward spread an enthusiasm for literature, the fine arts, and the joy of living. The invention and development of printing made books more easily accessible, and stimulated public interest in literature and learning. New aids to navigation, like the compass and Mercator's chart, made possible explorations and colonization beyond the seas. The old feudal system had broken up. Nationalism grew. And the claims of the Church were submitted to a close scrutiny, which culminated in the Protestant Reformation.

Like all "ages," the age of Elizabeth has no definite beginning or ending. True enough, *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557), which introduced two great literary forms into England, is almost coincident with the accession of Elizabeth in 1558; and 1603, the year of her death, saw the publication of *Hamlet*. For convenience' sake, these dates may be assumed as limits, but the spirit of the age may be found beyond these arbitrary markers.

The dominant figure of the period was Queen Elizabeth, the ablest of English rulers. Like her father, Henry VIII, she was skilled in statecraft, and surrounded herself with able advisers. She restored Protestantism, which Henry VIII had introduced into England and which her predecessor, Queen Mary, had abolished. She stabilized the government and maintained peace throughout most of her long reign. Under her rule, England advanced rapidly in commerce and colonization. Above all, she was the patroness Queen, whom all her courtiers and poets were eager to honor and to please.

It was, we have said, the time of the "revival of learning." Accompanying the enthusiasm for Latin and Greek arose in England a renewed interest in the literatures of France and especially Italy, the two countries which had a pronounced influence upon English letters in this period. Those who knew no foreign language had at their disposal the many splendid Elizabethan translations, like Lord Berners's *Froissart* (1525) and Marcus Aurelius (1534), Phaer's *Aeneid* (1558-62), Golding's *Orid* (1565-75), Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566, 1567), North's *Plutarch* (1579), Harrington's *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto (1591), Chapman's *Iliad* (1598-1611), and *Odyssey* (1614, 1615), Fairfax's *Jerusalem Delivered* of Tasso (1600), and Florio's *Montaigne* (1603).

In England, moreover, it was the age of discovery and a time of national pride. Explorations followed rapidly upon Columbus's success. Names like Frobisher, Raleigh, and Drake became household words. The romantic accounts of these voyages were published by Hakluyt, Purchas, and others, to inspire poets from Shakespeare to Coleridge. Likewise, the stimulating past of England was made easily available in the chronicles of Fabyan, Stowe, and Holinshed, and in turn became the subject-matter of numerous chronicle plays treating the glorious epochs in England's history. National pride received additional inspiration from the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

In brief, the imagination of England was aroused. Men were exuberantly conscious of life, proud of individuality, eager to develop personality according to some pattern, to become well-rounded or "complete" gentlemen. There was a universal regard for craftsmanship. Even the ordinary man took delight in splendor, in dress, in pageantry, in elaborate language, in music. England was truly "merry," singing England.

Poetry was the language of the age. Numerous poets appeared, writing for the joy of it, because they had to express their feelings, or for the sake of emulation, often with no thought of publication or lasting fame. Some of the poems of these anonymous poets have been preserved in the various collections of the period, like *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557), *A Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576), the most popular of all, *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578), and *England's Helicon* (1600). Many have been lost. Small poet and great poet alike experimented with verse forms. Some tried to establish English verse on classical or quantitative principles. Two noteworthy forms, the sonnet and blank verse, were developed, and in them the great Elizabethans achieved the utmost in artistic skill — extreme flexibility within a fixed form.

Prose developed more slowly. In the early part of the sixteenth century, Latin or even Greek was still the accepted vehicle for expressing thoughts or ideas. Sir Thomas More, in fact, first wrote his *Utopia* (1516) in Latin. The translators, chroniclers, and writers of books of instruction were the chief employers of prose. Noble passages occur in Berners's translation of *Froissart*, in

Coverdale's and Tyndale's versions of the Bible (1539), in Florio's rendering of Montaigne's *Essays*, in Hakluyt, and in Raleigh. Sir Thomas Elyot in *The Book of the Governor* (1531) and Ascham wrote simple, direct prose, which fitted their purpose — education and instruction. The language of *The Book of Common Prayer*, compiled in 1548, is in itself edifying. In belles-lettres, Lyly, Sidney, Nash, and Lodge in his *Rosalind* (1590) developed individual styles; and they helped to evolve a new literary form — prose fiction.

The glory of the age, however, was its drama, a remarkable literary phenomenon. Foreign influences did much to hasten and to help Elizabethan drama, but its chief characteristics remained essentially English. From abroad came many of its plots. From the classics, especially from Seneca, came the division of plays into five acts (a custom which prevailed until the days of Fielding), and much of the paraphernalia of the tragedy of blood, as well as the use of Latin stage directions, some of which have persisted to this day. These elements appear, for instance, in the first English tragedy in blank verse, Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc* (first acted in 1561). They appear also in Shakespeare. From Plautus and Terence were derived such stock characters as the parasite and the *miles gloriosus* or braggart soldier; likewise, the type of plot that we find in Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* and in the *Comedy of Errors*. In a short space of time the morality play and interlude of the beginning of the century were superseded by a new type of playwriting, to which Lyly, Kyd, Greene, and Peele contributed important and essential features, helping to make possible the astoundingly quick development of England's greatest dramatists, Marlowe and Shakespeare.

For a description of Elizabethan times the reader may consult H. T. Stephenson, *Shakespeare's London* (New York, 1905), J. D. Wilson, *Life in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge, 1911), Stow's contemporary *Survey of London* (Everyman's Library), and volumes 3 and 4 of H. D. Traill, *Social England*. For the drama of the period see A. H. Thorndike, *Tragedy* (Houghton Mifflin Company), C. F. Tucker Brooke, *Tudor Drama* (Houghton Mifflin Company), and F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama* (Houghton Mifflin Company). The representative plays of the age may be found in W. A. Neilson, *Chief Elizabethan Dramatists* (Houghton Mifflin Company). F. E. Schelling, *A Book of Elizabethan Lyrics* (Ginn & Co.) contains a good survey of the poetry of the period.

SIR THOMAS WYATT (1503-1542)

The names of Sir Thomas Wyatt, baronet, 1503-1542, and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey 1517?-1547, are usually connected in literary history, not as collaborators, after the manner of Beaumont and Fletcher, but as the writers who were the first to introduce into England the sonnet form — which was already well known in France, whither it had come from Italy. Surrey also earned the distinction of being the first English author to use blank verse, in his fragmentary translations from the *Æneid*. The works of both poets, after circulating about the court in manuscript, were printed for the first time in a collection of poems called *Tottel's Miscellany*, published in 1557, the year before Elizabeth's accession. In this volume, which appeared after the death of the writers, were gathered over ninety of Wyatt's poems and forty of Surrey's.

Of the lives of Wyatt and Surrey, it need only be said that both were well-educated, accomplished gentlemen at the court of Henry VIII. Surrey, the younger of the two, was son and heir of the third Duke of Norfolk. Both were engaged in various diplomatic missions, and both were, at times, imprisoned in the Tower, where Surrey, in 1547, was beheaded, five years after his cousin Catherine Howard, the Queen, had met a similar fate.

The fame of Wyatt and Surrey is due to the fact that they are the first writers to bring the spirit of the Italian Renaissance into English poetry. This influence is most evident in their sonnets, although even in them the English element is strong.

The Italian or Petrarchan sonnet consists of an octave — eight lines in iambic pentameter rhyming *abba abba*; and a sestet — six lines rhyming in any fashion, provided the last two lines are not a couplet. Both Wyatt and Surrey, however, inclined more to the form of the sonnet used later by Shakespeare and called after him Shakespearean. This consists of three groups of four lines, with a concluding couplet, thus: *abab cdcd efef gg*. Sometimes a rhyme used in one group might be employed in another also.

The blank verse of Surrey, destined to be the vehicle of expression for the great Elizabethan dramatists, is the same line as in the sonnet or in the couplets of Chaucer, without, of course, the rhyme.

Besides these two forms, Wyatt and Surrey used other verse structures also, as will be seen below.

THE LOVER COMPARETH HIS STATE TO A SHIP IN PERILOUS STORM TOSSED ON THE SEA

My galley charged with forgetfulness
Thorough sharp seas, in winter nights doth
pass,
'Tween rock and rock; and eke my foe,
alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelty,
And every hour, a thought in readiness, 5
As though that death were light in such a
case.
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forced sighs, and trusty fearfulness.
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain
Hath done the wearied cords great hinder-
ance, 10
Weathed with error, and with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain;
Drowned is reason that should be my com-
fort,
And I remain, despairing of the port.

THE LOVER HAVING DREAMED OF ENJOYING OF HIS LOVE, COMPLAINETH THAT THE DREAM IS NOT EITHER LONGER OR TRUER

Unstable dream, according to the place,
Be steadfast once, or else at least be true.
By tasted sweetness make me not to rue
The sudden loss of thy false feigned grace.
By good respect in such a dangerous case 5
Thou broughtst not her into these tossing
seas,
But madest my spirit to live, my care t'en-
crease,
My body in tempest her delight t'embrace.
The body dead, the spirit had his desire;
Painless was th' one, the other in delight. 10
Why then, alas! did it not keep it right,
But thus return to leap into the fire,
And where it was at wish, could not
remain?
Such mocks of dreams do turn to deadly
pain!

A RENOUNCING OF LOVE

Farewell, Love, and all thy laws for ever!
Thy baited hooks shall tangle me no more:
Senec and Plato call me from thy lore
To perfect wealth my wit for to endeavor.
In blind error when I did persevere, 5

Thy sharp repulse, that pricketh aye so sore,
Taught me in trifles that I set no store;
But 'scape forth thence, since liberty is
lever.¹

Therefore, farewell! go trouble younger
hearts,
And in me claim no more authority. 10
With idle youth go use thy property,
And thereon spend thy many brittle darts;
For hitherto though I have lost my time,
Me list no longer rotten boughs to climb.

THE LOVER BESEECHETH HIS MISTRESS NOT TO FORGET HIS STEADFAST FAITH AND TRUE INTENT

Forget not yet the tried intent
Of such a truth as I have meant;
My great travail so gladly spent,
Forget not yet!
Forget not yet when first began 5
The weary life ye know, since whan
The suit, the service none tell can;
Forget not yet!

Forget not yet the great assays,
The cruel wrong, the scornful ways, 10
The painful patience in delays,
Forget not yet!

Forget not! O, forget not this,
How long ago hath been, and is,
The mind that never meant amiss — 15
Forget not yet!

Forget not then thine own approved,
The which so long hath thee so loved,
Whose steadfast faith yet never moved:
Forget not this! 20

AN EARNEST SUIT TO HIS UN- KIND MISTRESS NOT TO FORSAKE HIM

And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay, say nay, for shame!
To save thee from the blame
Of all my grief and grame.²
And wilt thou leave me thus? 5
Say nay! say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath loved thee so long

1 dearer.

2 sadness.

In wealth and woe among:
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath given thee my heart
Never for to depart
Neither for pain nor smart:
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
And have no more pity
Of him that loveth thee?
Alas, thy cruelty!
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!

THE LOVER COMPLAINETH THE UNKINDNESS OF HIS LOVE

My lute, awake, perform the last
Labor that thou and I shall waste,
And end that I have now begun.
And when this song is sung and past,
My lute, be still, for I have done.

As to be heard where ear is none,
As lead to grave ¹ in marble stone,
My song may pierce her heart as soon.
Should we then sigh, or sing, or moan?
No, no, my lute, for I have done.

The rocks do not so cruelly
Repulse the waves continually,
As she my suit and affection;
So that I am past remedy,
Whereby ² my lute and I have done.

Proud of the spoil that thou hast got
Of simple hearts through Lovè's shot,
By whom unkind thou hast them won,
Think not he hath his bow forgot,
Although my lute and I have done.

Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain,
That makest but game of earnest pain;
Trow ³ not alone under the sun
Unquit ⁴ to cause thy lovers plain,
Although my lute and I have done.

May chance thee lie ⁵ withered and old
In winter nights, that are so cold,

Plaining in vain unto the moon;
Thy wishes then dare not be told:
Care then who list, for I have done. 30

And then may chance thee to repent
The time that thou hast lost and spent,
To cause thy lovers sigh and swoon:
Then shalt thou know beauty but lent,
And wish and want, as I have done. 35

Now cease, my lute! This is the last
Labor that thou and I shall waste;
And ended is that we begun:
Now is thy song both sung and past;
My lute, be still, for I have done. 40

OF THE MEAN AND SURE ESTATE

WRITTEN TO JOHN POINS¹

My mother's maids, when they did sew and
spin,
They sang sometime a song of the field mouse
That, for because her livelihood was but thin,
Would needs go seek her townish sister's
house.
5 She thought herself endured too much pain; 5
The stormy blasts her cave so sore did souse
That when the furrows swimm'd with the
rain,
She must lie cold and wet in sorry plight; ~
And worse than that, bare meat there did
remain
10 To comfort her when she her house had
dight; ² 10
Sometime a barley corn; sometime a bean,
For which she labored hard both day and
night
15 In harvest time whilst she might go and
glean;
And where store ³ was stroyed ⁴ with the
flood,
Then welaway! for she undone was clean. 15
Then was she fain to take instead of food
20 Sleep, if she might, her hunger to beguile.
"My sister," quoth she, "hath a living
good,
And hence from me she dwelleth not a mile.
In cold and storm she lieth warm and dry 20
In bed of down, the dirt doth not defile
25 Her tender foot, she laboreth not as I.
Richly she feedeth and at the richman's cost,
And for her meat she needs not crave nor cry.
By sea, by land, of the delicates, the most 25

¹ cut into, inlay. ² wherefore. ³ think.
⁴ without punishment.
⁵ It may happen that you will lie.

¹ A friend of Wyatt's. ² put in shape.
³ supply. ⁴ destroyed.

Her cater¹ seeks and spareth for no peril,
 She feedeth on boiled bacon, meat and roast,
 And hath thereof neither charge nor travail;
 And when she list, the liquor of the grape
 Doth glad her heart till that her belly
 swell.”

And at this journey she maketh but a
 jape;²

So forth she goeth, trusting of all this wealth
 With her sister her part so for to shape,
 That if she might keep herself in health,
 To live a lady while her life doth last.

And to the door now is she come by
 stealth,

And with her foot anon she scrapeth full fast.
 Th’ other for fear durst not well scarce
 appear,

Of every noise so was the wretch aghast.
 At last she asked softly who was there,

And in her language as well as she could.
 “Peep!” quoth the other sister, “I am here.”
 “Peace,” quoth the town mouse, “why
 speakest thou so loud?”

And by the hand she took her fair and well.
 “Welcome,” quoth she, “my sister, by the
 Rood!”

She feasted her, that joy it was to tell
 The fare they had; they drank the wine so
 clear,

And as to purpose now and then it fell,
 She cheered her with “Ho, sister, what
 cheer!”

Amid this joy befell a sorry chance,
 That, welay! the stranger bought full dear
 The fare she had, for, as she looks askance,
 Under a stool she spied two steaming³ eyes
 In a round head with sharp ears. In France
 Was never mouse so feared, for, though
 unwise

Had not i-seen such a beast before.
 Yet had nature taught her after her guise
 To know her foe and dread him evermore.
 The towney mouse fled, she knew whither to
 go;

Th’ other had no shift, but wanders sore.
 Feard of her life. At home she wished her
 tho,⁴

And to the door, alas! as she did skip,
 The heaven it would, lo! and eke her chance
 was so,

At the threshold her silly foot did trip;
 And ere she might recover it again,
 The traitor cat had caught her by the hip,
 And made her there against her will remain,
 That had forgot her poor surety and rest
 For seeming wealth wherein she thought to
 reign.

Alas, my Pains, how men do seek the best,
 And find the worst by error as they stray!
 And no marvel; when sight is so opprest,
 And blinds the guide, anon out of the way
 Goeth guide and all in seeking quiet life.

O wretched minds, there is no gold that
 may

Grant that you seek; no war, no peace, no
 strife.

No, no, although thy head were hooped with
 gold,

Sergeant with mace, halbred, sword, nor
 knife,

Cannot repulse the care that follow should.
 Each kind of life hath with him his disease.

Live in delight even as thy lust would,
 And thou shalt find, when lust doth most
 thee please,

It irketh straight, and by itself doth fade.
 A small thing is it that may thy mind ap-
 pease.

None of ye all there is that is so mad
 To seek for grapes on brambles or on briars;
 Nor none, I trow, that hath his wit so bad
 To set his hay¹ for conies² over rivers,
 Nor ye set not a drag-net for an hare;

And yet the thing that most is your desire
 Ye do mis-seek with more travail and care.
 Make plain thine heart, that it be not knotted
 With hope or dread, and see thy will be bare
 From all effects whom vice hath ever spotted.
 Thyself content with that is thee assigned,
 And use it well that that is to thee allotted.

Then seek no more out of thyself to find
 The thing that thou hast sought so long be-
 fore,

For thou shalt feel it sticking in thy mind.
 Mad, if ye list to continue your sore,
 Let present pass and gape on time to come,
 And deep yourself in travail more and more.

Henceforth, my Pains, this shall be all and
 some,

These wretched fools shall have naught else
 of me;

But to the great God and to his high
 dome³

None other pain pray I for them to be,
 But, when the rage doth lead them from the
 right,

That, looking backward, virtue they may
 see,

Even as she is so goodly fair and bright,
 And whilst they clasp their lusts in arms
 across,

Grant them, good Lord, as thou mayst of
 thy might,

To fret inward for losing such a loss.

1 caterer. 2 jest. 3 glittering. 4 then.

1 trap. 2 rabbits. 3 judgment.

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY (1517?-1547)

DESCRIPTION OF SPRING

WHEREIN EACH THING RENEWS, SAVE
ONLY THE LOVER

The soote ¹ season that bud and bloom forth
brings,

With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle ² to her make ³ hath told her tale:
Summer is come, for every spray now
springs; ⁵

The hart hath hung his old head on the pale; ⁴
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;
The fishes flete ⁵ with new repaired scale;
The adder all her slough away she slings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale; ¹⁰
The busy bee her honey now she mings.⁶

Winter is worn, that was the flowers' bale:
And thus I see among these pleasant
things

Each care decays, and yet my sorrow
springs!

COMPLAINT OF A LOVER
REBUKED

Love, that liveth and reigneth in my thought,
That built his seat within my captive breast,
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.

She that me taught to love and suffer pain, ⁵
My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire
With shamefast cloak to shadow and refrain,
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.
The coward Love then to the heart apace
Taketeth his flight, whereas he lurks and
plains,⁷ ¹⁰

His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.
For my lord's guilt thus faultless bide I pains.

Yet from my lord shall not my foot re-
move;

Sweet is his death that takes his end by
love.

A COMPLAINT BY NIGHT OF
THE LOVER NOT BELOVED

Alas, so all things now do hold their peace!
Heaven and earth disturbed in nothing;
The beasts, the air, the birds their song do
cease,

¹ sweet. ² turtle-dove ³ mate.
⁴ stake, picket. ⁵ float. ⁶ mixes. ⁷ complains.

The night's chair the stars about doth bring.
Calm is the sea; the waves work less and
less; ⁵

So am not I, whom love, alas, doth wring,
Bringing before my face the great increase
Of my desires, whereat I weep and sing,
In joy and woe, as in a doubtful ease.
For my sweet thoughts sometime do pleasure
bring; ¹⁰

But by and by, the cause of my disease
Gives me a pang, that inwardly doth sting,
When that I think what grief it is again,
To live and lack the thing should rid my
pain.

PRISONED IN WINDSOR, HE
RECOUNTETH HIS PLEASURE
THERE PASSED

So cruel prison how could betide, alas,
As proud Windsor? where I in lust and joy,
With a King's son, my childish years did pass,
In greater feast than Priam's sons of Troy.
Where each sweet place returns a taste full
sour, ⁵

The large green courts, where we were wont
to hove,¹

With eyes cast up into the maiden's tower,
And easy sighs, such as folk draw in love.
The stately seats, the ladies bright of hue,
The dances short, long tales of great de-
light; ¹⁰

With words and looks, that tigers could but
rue;

When each of us did plead the other's right.
The palme-play ² where, despoiled for the
game,

With dazed eyes oft we by gleams of love
Have missed the ball, and got sight of our
dame, ¹⁵

To bait ³ her eyes, which kept the leads
above.

The gravelled ground, with sleeves tied on
the helm,

On foaming horse, with swords and friendly
hearts;

With cheer, as though one should another
whelm,

When we have fought, and chased oft with
darts; ²⁰

With silver drops the mead yet spread for
ruth,

¹ linger. ² tennis. ³ allure.

In active games of nimbleness and strength,
 Where we did strain, trained with swarms of
 youth,
 Our tender limbs, that yet shot up in length.
 The secret groves, which oft we made
 resound²⁵
 Of pleasant plaint, and of our ladies' praise;
 Recording oft what grace each one had
 found,
 What hope of speed, what dread of long
 delays.
 The wild forest, the clothed holts with green;
 With reins availed,¹ and swift ybreathed
 horse,³⁰
 With cry of hounds, and merry blasts be-
 tween,
 When we did chase the fearful hart of force.
 The void walls eke, that harbored us each
 night:
 Wherewith, alas! reviveth in my breast
 The sweet accord, such sleeps as yet de-
 light;³⁵
 The pleasant dreams, the quiet bed of rest; —
 The secret thoughts, imparted with such
 trust;
 The wanton talk, the divers change of play;
 The friendship sworn, each promise kept so
 just,
 Wherewith we passed the winter night
 away.⁴⁰
 And with this thought the blood forsakes the
 face;
 The tears berain my cheeks of deadly hue:
 The which, as soon as sobbing sighs, alas!
 Upsupped have, thus I my plaint renew:
 "O place of bliss, renewer of my woes!"⁴⁵
 Give me account, where is my noble fere,²
 Whom in thy walls thou dost each night
 enclose,
 To other lief,³ but unto me most dear."
 Echo, alas! that doth my sorrow rue
 Returns thereat a hollow sound of plaint.⁵⁰
 Thus I alone, where all my freedom grew,
 In prison pine, with bondage and restraint;
 And with remembrance of the greater grief,
 To banish the less, I find my chief relief.

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN HAPPY LIFE

Martial,⁴ the things that do attain
 The happy life be these, I find;
 The riches left, not got with pain;
 The fruitful ground, the quiet mind.

¹ slackened.

² companion.

³ dear.

⁴ The Latin poet, 43-104 A.D.

The equal friend, no grudge, no strife,⁵
 No charge of rule nor governance;
 Without disease, the healthful life;
 The household of continuance.

The mean¹ diet, no delicate fare;
 True wisdom joined with simpleness;¹⁰
 The night discharged of all care,
 Where wine the wit may not oppress.

The faithful wife, without debate;
 Such sleeps as may beguile the night;
 Contented with thine own estate,¹⁵
 Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

ON THE DEATH OF SIR T[HOMAS] W[YATT]

W[yatt] resteth here that quick could never
 rest;
 Whose heavenly gifts increased by disdain,
 And virtue sank the deeper in his breast;
 Such profit he by envy could obtain.

A head where wisdom mysteries did frame,⁵
 Whose hammers beat still in that lively
 brain,
 As on a stit² where that some work of fame
 Was daily wrought, to turn to Britain's
 gain.

A visage stern and mild: where both did grow
 Vice to contemn, in virtue to rejoice;¹⁰
 Amid great storms whom grace assured so
 To live upright, and smile at fortune's
 choice.

A hand that taught what might be said in
 rhyme;
 That reft Chaucer the glory of his wit;
 A mark, the which (unperfected for time)¹⁵
 Some may approach, but never none shall
 hit.

A tongue that served in foreign realms his
 king;
 Whose courteous talk to virtue did inflame
 Each noble heart: a worthy guide to bring
 Our English youth by travail unto fame.²⁰

An eye whose judgment none affect³ could
 blind,
 Friends to allure and foes to reconcile,
 Whose piercing look did represent a mind
 With virtue faithful reposed void of guile.

¹ moderate.

² anvil.

³ no affection.

A heart where dread was never so impest ²⁵
To hide the thought that might the truth
advance;

In neither fortune loft,¹ nor yet repress,
To swell in wealth, or yield unto mischance.

A valiant corpse, where force and beauty met,
Happy alas, too happy but for foes, ³⁰
Lived, and ran the race that nature set;
Of manhood's shape where she the mould
did lose.

But to the heavens that simple soul is fled,
Which left with such a covet Christ to know
Witness of faith that never shall be dead, ³⁵
Sent for our health, but not received so.

Thus, for our guilt, this jewel have we lost;
The earth his bones, the heavens possess his
ghost!

VIRGIL'S ÆNEID

Book II, lines 1-28

They whisted ² all, with fixed face attent,
When Prince Æneas from the royal seat
Thus 'gan to speak: "O Queen, it is thy will

I should renew a woe cannot be told;
How that the Greeks did spoil and over-
throw ⁵
The Phrygian ¹ wealth and wailful ² realm
of Troy.

Those ruthful things that I myself beheld,
And whereof no small part fell to my share;
Which to express, who could refrain from
tears?

What Myrmidon? ³ or yet what Dolopes? ³ ¹⁰
What stern Ulysses' waged soldier?

And lo! moist night now from the welkin falls,
And stars declining counsel us to rest;

But since so great is thy delight to hear
Of our mishaps and Troy's last decay, ¹⁵

Though to record the same my mind abhors
And plaint eschews,⁴ yet thus will I begin:—

The Greek's chieftains, all irked with the war,
Wherein they wasted had so many years,

And oft repulsed by fatal destiny, ²⁰
A huge horse made, high raised like a hill,
By the divine science of Minerva,—

Of cloven fir compacted were his ribs,—
For their return a feigned sacrifice,—

The fame whereof so wandered it at point.⁵ ²⁵
In the dark bulk they closed bodies of men
Chosen by lot, and did enstuff by stealth

The hollow womb with armed soldiers.

ROGER ASCHAM (1515-1568)

Ascham was born in 1515 in Yorkshire. He was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where later he became a teacher. His great interest was in Greek, the study of which had been fostered by the humanistic revival. Besides his academic duties, he served, in various capacities, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth. He was Latin Secretary to the last three; and before her accession he was tutor of languages to Queen Elizabeth, the best educated woman of her time. Ascham died in 1568.

Ascham was primarily a scholar and a teacher. In line with his vocation, he wrote three books, two of which have lasted because of their style and subject-matter. They are *Toxophilus*, 1545, a treatise on the educational and patriotic advantages of archery, and *The Schoolmaster*, published in 1570 after his death, a plan for a better system for "the bringing up of youth," based upon the new humanism which had arisen during the Renaissance.

In spite of the inspiration that he received from foreign literatures, Ascham remained a thorough Englishman. "I write English, and to Englishmen," he declared in *The Schoolmaster*. He despised Italianate Englishmen, regretting, like a Puritan, that many of the books "late translated out of Italian" did "harm with enticing men to ill living." Yet he was not stubborn, and could, in the midst of the intellectual arguments of his day, remark with humorous detachment, "I have been a looker-on in the cockpit of learning these many years."

INTRODUCTION TO TOXOPHILUS

TO ALL GENTLEMEN AND YEOMEN OF
ENGLAND

Bias the wise man came to Cræsus ³ the
rich king, on a time when he was making

new ships, purposing to have subdued by
water the out-isles lying betwixt Greece and
Asia Minor. "What news now in Greece?"
saith the king to Bias. "None other news
but these," saith Bias: "that the isles of
Greece have prepared a wonderful company
of horsemen to over-run Lydia withal."

¹ proud.

² became silent.

³ King of Lydia, sixth century B.C.

¹ Troy was in Phrygia.

² The Myrmidons and the Dolopes fought for Greece.

⁴ avoids complaining.

² sorrowful.

⁵ fitly.

"There is nothing under heaven," saith the King, "that I would so soon wish, as that they durst be so bold to meet us on the land with horse." "And think you," saith Bias, "that there is any thing which they would sooner wish, than that you should be so fond¹ to meet them on the water with ships?" And so Cræsus, hearing not the true news, but perceiving the wise man's mind and counsel, both gave then over making of his ships, and left also behind him a wonderful example for all commonwealths to follow: that is, evermore to regard and set most by that thing whereunto nature hath made them most apt, and use hath made them most fit.

By this matter I mean the shooting in the long bow, for Englishmen; which thing with all my heart I do wish, and if I were of authority,² I would counsel all the gentlemen and yeomen of England, not to change it with any other thing, how goodsoever it seems to be; but that still, according to the old wont³ of England, youth should use it for the most honest pastime in peace, that men might handle it as a most sure weapon in war. Other strong weapons, which both experience doth prove to be good, and the wisdom of the King's Majesty and his council provides to be had, are not ordained to take away shooting; but that both, not compared together whether should be better than the other, but so joined together that the one should be always an aid and help for the other, might so strengthen the realm on all sides, that no kind of enemy, in any kind of weapon, might pass and go beyond us.

For this purpose I, partly provoked by the counsel of some gentlemen, partly moved by the love which I have always borne toward shooting, have written this little treatise; wherein, if I have not satisfied any man, I trust he will the rather be content with my doing, because I am (I suppose) the first which hath said any thing in this matter, (and few beginnings be perfect, saith wise men;) and also because, if I have said amiss, I am content that any man amend it: or, if I have said too little, any man that will, to add what him pleaseth to it.

My mind is, in profiting and pleasing every man, to hurt or displease no man, intending none other purpose, but that youth might be stirred to labor, honest pastime, and virtue, and as much as lieth in me,

plucked from idleness, unthrifty games, and vice: which thing I have labored only in this book, showing how fit shooting is for all kinds of men; how honest a pastime for the mind; how wholesome an exercise for the body; not vile for great men to use, not costly for poor men to sustain, not lurking in holes and corners for ill men at their pleasure to misuse it, but abiding in the open sight and face of the world, for good men, if it fault, by their wisdom to correct it.

And here I would desire all gentlemen and yeomen to use this pastime in such a mean, that the outrageousness of great gaming should not hurt the honesty of shooting, which, of his own nature, is always joined with honesty; yet for men's faults oftentimes blamed unworthily, as all good things have been, and evermore shall be.

If any man would blame me, either for taking such a matter in hand, or else for writing it in the English tongue, this answer I may make him, that when the best of the realm think it honest for them to use, I, one of the meanest sort, ought not to suppose it vile for me to write; and though to have written it in another tongue, had been both more profitable for my study, and also more honest for my name, yet I can think my labor well bestowed, if with a little hindrance of my profit and name, may come any furtherance to the pleasure or commodity of the gentlemen and yeomen of England, for whose sake I took this matter in hand. And as for the Latin or Greek tongue, every thing is so excellently done in them, that none can do better: in the English tongue, contrary, every thing in a manner so meanly both for the matter and handling, that no man can do worse. For therein the least learned, for the most part, have been always most ready to write. And they which had least hope in Latin, have been most bold in English: when surely every man that is most ready to talk, is not most able to write. He that will write well in any tongue, must follow this counsel of Aristotle, to speak as the common people do, to think as wise men do: and so should every man understand him, and the judgment of wise men allow¹ him. Many English writers have not done so, but using strange words, as Latin, French, and Italian, do make all things dark and hard. Once I communed² with a man which reasoned the English tongue to be enriched and increased thereby, saying, "Who will not praise that feast where a man shall drink at a dinner

¹ foolish.

² influence.

³ An Englishman would recall the battle of Crécy in 1346, when Edward III and the Black Prince defeated the French, largely through the skill of the English bowmen.

¹ approve.

² conversed.

both wine, ale, and beer?" "Truly (quoth I) they be all good, every one taken by himself alone, but if you put malmsey and sack, red wine and white, ale and beer, and all in one pot, you shall make a drink neither easy to be known, nor yet wholesome for the body." Cicero, in following Isocrates, Plato, and Demosthenes, increased the Latin tongue after another sort. This way, because divers men that write do not know, they can neither follow it, because of their ignorance, nor yet will praise it for very arrogancy, two faults, seldom the one out of the other's company.

English writers by diversity of time have taken divers matters in hand. In our fathers' time nothing was read but books of feigned chivalry,¹ wherein a man by reading should be led to none other end, but only to manslaughter and bawdry. If any man suppose they were good enough to pass the time withal, he is deceived. For surely vain words do work no small thing in vain, ignorant, and young minds, especially if they be given any thing thereunto of their own nature. These books (as I have heard say) were made the most part in abbeyes and monasteries, — a very likely and fit fruit of such an idle and blind kind of living. In our time now, when every man is given to know, much rather than to live well, very many do write, but after such a fashion as very many do shoot. Some shooters take in hand stronger bows than they be able to maintain.² This thing maketh them sometime to outshoot the mark, sometime to shoot far wide, and perchance hurt some that look on. Other that never learned to shoot, nor yet knoweth good shaft nor bow, will be as busy as the best, but such one commonly plucketh³ down a side, and crafty archers which be against him, will be both glad of him, and also ever ready to lay and bet with him: it were better for such one to sit down than shoot. Other there be, which have very good bow and shafts, and good knowledge in shooting, but they have been brought up in such evil favored shooting, that they can neither shoot fair⁴ nor yet near.⁵ If any man will apply these things together, he shall not see the one far differ from the other. And I also, amongst all other, in writing this little treatise, have followed some young shooters, which both will begin to shoot, for

a little money, and also will use¹ to shoot once or twice about the mark for nought, afore they begin a-good. And therefore did I take this little matter in hand, to assay² myself, and hereafter, by the Grace of God, if the judgment of wise men, that look on, think that I can do any good, I may perchance cast my shaft among other, for better game. Yet in writing this book, some man will marvel perchance, why that I, being an imperfect shooter, should take in hand to write of making a perfect archer: the same man, peradventure, will marvel how a whetstone, which is blunt, can make the edge of a knife sharp. I would the same man should consider also, that in going about any matter, there be found things to be considered, doing, saying, thinking, and perfectness: first, there is no man that doth so well, but he can say better, or else some men, which be now stark nought,³ should be too good: again, no man can utter with his tongue so well as he is able to imagine with his mind, and yet perfectness itself is far above all thinking: then, seeing that saying is one step nearer perfectness than doing, let every man leave marvelling why my word shall rather express, than my deed shall perform, perfect shooting.

I trust no man will be offended with this little book, except it be some fletchers⁴ and bowyers,⁵ thinking hereby that many that love shooting shall be taught to refuse such naughty⁶ wares as they would utter.⁷ Honest fletchers and bowyers do not so, and they that be dishonest, ought rather to amend themselves for doing ill, than being angry with me for saying well. A fletcher hath even as good a quarrel to be angry with an archer that refuseth an ill shaft, as a bladesmith hath to a fletcher that forsaketh⁸ to buy of him a naughty knife: for as an archer must be content that a fletcher know a good shaft in every point for the perfecter making of it, so an honest fletcher will also be content that a shooter know a good shaft in every point, for the perfecter using of it; because the one knoweth like a fletcher how to make it, the other knoweth like an archer how to use it. And seeing the knowledge is one in them both, yet the end divers, surely that fletcher is an enemy to archers and artillery⁹ which cannot be content that an archer know a shaft as well for his use in shooting, as he himself should know a shaft

¹ e.g., the mediæval romances and Malory.

² handle easily.

³ A technical term, meaning to shoot in a slovenly manner.

⁴ gracefully.

⁵ accurately.

¹ make a practice.

³ absolutely worthless.

⁵ bow makers.

⁸ refuses.

² try.

⁴ arrow-makers.

⁷ produce.

⁹ equipment for shooting.

for his advantage in selling. And the rather, because shafts be not made so much to be sold, but chiefly to be used. And seeing that use and occupying¹ is the end why a shaft is made, the making, as it were, a mean for occupying, surely the knowledge in every point of a good shaft, is more to be required in a shooter than a fletcher.

Yet, as I said before, no honest fletcher will be angry with me, seeing I do not teach how to make a shaft, which belongeth only to a good fletcher, but to know and handle a shaft, which belongeth to an archer. And

¹ employment, use.

this little book, I trust, shall please and profit both parties; for good bows and shafts shall be better known to the commodity¹ of all shooters, and good shooting may, perchance, be the more occupied to the profit of all bowyers and fletchers. And thus I pray God that all fletchers, getting their living truly, and all archers using shooting honestly, and all manner of men that favor artillery, may live continually in health and merriness, obeying their prince as they should, and loving God as they ought: to whom, for all things, be all honor and glory for ever. Amen.

¹ advantage.

EDMUND SPENSER (1552?-1599)

The life of Spenser, "the poet's poet," began in obscurity and possibly poverty. He was born in London, in the countryside just outside the walls of the old city, about 1552. At the age of nine he entered the newly established Merchant Taylors' School, and in 1569 was admitted as a sizar, that is, an indigent student, to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, the university that attracted most of England's poets. Aside from the fact that he took his B.A. in 1573 and his M.A. in 1576, the great event in Spenser's life at Cambridge was his friendship with Gabriel Harvey, the critic who later tried to introduce the quantitative scansion of classical verse into English. Through Harvey, in 1578, he met in London Sir Philip Sidney and Sidney's uncle, the Earl of Leicester, who was then the favorite of Queen Elizabeth. Leicester gave Spenser a secretarial position in his household. This enabled the poet to write and publish (anonymously in 1579) the twelve eclogues of *The Shepherd's Calendar*, dedicated to Sidney, and to begin *The Faerie Queene*. During this time he belonged to an informal club, the *Areopagus*, whose members for a while proposed the use of classical metres in English verse. Harvey and Sidney belonged to the coterie, as did Fulke Greville, later Sidney's biographer, and Dyer, the author of the well-known poem, "My Mind to me a Kingdom is."

The following year Spenser was appointed secretary to the Lord Deputy of Ireland. From this time until his death twenty years later the poet lived in Ireland, with the exception of three visits to London. During the next ten years he received several promotions, and a castle and estate in County Cork. The death of Sidney in 1586 affected him deeply. To commemorate his friend he wrote *Astrophel*.

Spenser had as near neighbor in Ireland, about this time, Sir Walter Raleigh, to whom he read much of *The Faerie Queene*. With Raleigh in 1590 he went to London on his first leave, and published the first three books of his masterpiece, which he dedicated to the Queen. These were enthusiastically received and brought him a pension from Elizabeth.

After a year he took up again his official position in Ireland. In 1594 he married Elizabeth Boyle, to whom he had addressed his sonnet sequence *Amoretti*; and for the wedding he wrote his splendid *Epithalamium*. Both were published in 1595. In the following year he returned to London, published the next three books of *The Faerie Queene* as well as the *Prothalamium*, written to celebrate the marriage of the two daughters of the Earl of Worcester. Shortly afterwards he returned to Ireland, where in 1598 his castle was burned during a rebellion. He escaped with his wife and children, went to London, and died there early in the new year, January 16, 1599. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the Poets' Corner, near Chaucer.

Spenser is second to Chaucer among all English poets up to his time, surpassed only by Shakespeare, and possibly Marlowe, among poets of the glorious Elizabethan age. He is read less to-day than Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Milton, largely because readers look for qualities in him which he does not possess. He is not great as a narrative or allegorical poet, and students reading for enjoyment will do well, at first, to ignore the story and the symbolism of *The Faerie Queene*. He is primarily a painter and musician in words, a forerunner of Keats in this respect, as Keats is of the modern imagists. Beauty was his aim, romantic beauty, sensuous, emotional or luxuriant, although often enough it is beauty which the poet could have created only after deep reflection upon the vanity and pain of life. Spenser is not a poet for a reader who seeks realistic verisimilitude even though he did, like all great artists, derive his material from experience. He must, frequently, be read after the manner in which one listens to music. We do not ask, "What does

the piece mean?" We feel it, we sense the meaning — a meaning which often could not be expressed in mere words; and above all, we enjoy the contexture of sounds.

Excellent one-volume editions of Spenser, with critical material, are R. E. N. Dodge's in the Cambridge Poets (Houghton Mifflin Company), and The Oxford, with an introduction by E. de Selincourt.

THE FAERIE QUEENE

The plan and general idea of *The Faerie Queene* is outlined clearly by Spenser in his letter to Raleigh, given below.

In reading the poem, one should bear in mind that the final *-e* is not regularly pronounced, that the ending *-ed* is; that all syllables of a word should be given full value, *-ion* being, for instance, two syllables; that often the meaning of a strange-looking word will be apparent as soon as the word is pronounced; that *y-* is the prefix of the past participle, like *ge-* in modern German; and that Spenser often uses inversions and transpositions not common in ordinary English.

For this poem Spenser evolved a new stanza. To a stanza of eight iambic pentameter lines rhyming *ababbcb* (which resembles somewhat Chaucer's *rime royal*), he added an Alexandrine or iambic hexameter, rhyming with the previous line. This stanza, the Spenserian, used later by Thomson in *The Castle of Indolence* and by Byron in *Childe Harold*, is the best stanza in the language for poem painting. The Alexandrine interrupts the flow of the story, but it makes a unit, as Spenser uses the stanza, exceptional in its descriptive and melodious qualities.

TO

THE MOST HIGH, MIGHTIE, AND MAGNIFICENT

EMPRESSE,

RENOWNED FOR PIETIE, VERTVE, AND
ALL GRATIOVS GOVERNMENT,

ELIZABETH,

BY THE GRACE OF GOD,

Queene of England, Frabnce, and
Ireland, and of Virginia,
Defendour of the Faith, &c.

HER MOST HVMBLE SERVAUNT

EDMVND SPENSER,

DOTH, IN ALL HVMILITIE,

DEDICATE, PRESENT, AND CONSECRATE

THESE HIS LABOVRS,

TO LIVE WITH THE ETERNITIE OF HER FAME.

A LETTER OF THE AUTHORS,

EXPOUNDING HIS WHOLE INTENTION IN
THE COURSE OF THIS WORKE: WHICH,
FOR THAT IT GIVETH GREAT LIGHT TO
THE READER, FOR THE BETTER UNDER-
STANDING IS HEREUNTO ANNEXED.

TO THE RIGHT NOBLE AND VALOROUS
SIR WALTER RALEIGH, KNIGHT,
LORD WARDEIN OF THE STANNERYES, AND
HER MAIESTIES LIEFETENAUNT
OF THE COUNTY OF CORNEWAYLL.

SIR, knowing how doubtfully all Allegories may be construed, and this booke of mine, which I have entituled the Faery Queene, being a continued Allegory, or darke conceit, I have thought good, as well for avoyding of gealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading thereof, (being so by you commanded,) to discover unto you the general intention and meaning, which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned, without expressing of any particular purposes, or by accidents, therein occasioned. The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: Which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historical fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter then for profite of the ensample, I chose the hystorie of King Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of envy, and suspicion of present time. In which I have followed all the antique Poets historical; first Homere, who in the Persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses hath ensampled a good governour and a vertuous man, the one in his Ilias, the other in his Odysseis: then Virgil, whose like intention was to doe in the person of Aeneas: after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando: and lately Tasso discovered them againe, and formed both parts in two persons, namely that part which they in Philosophy call Ethice, or vertues of a private man, coloured in his Rinaldo; the other named Politice in his Godfredo. By

ensample of which excellent Poets, I labour to portraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private morall vertues, as Aristotle hath devised; the which is the purpose of these first twelve bookes:¹ which if I finde to be well accepted, I may be perhaps encouraged to frame the other part of politticke vertues in his person, after that hee came to be king.

To some, I know, this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermilyoned at large, as they use, then thus cloudily enwrapped in Allegoricall devises. But such, me seeme, should be satisfied with the use of these dayes, seeing all things accounted by their shoves, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune sence. For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one, in the exquisite depth of his judgement, formed a Commune welth, such as it should be; but the other in the person of Cyrus, and the Persians, fashioned a government, such as might best be: So much more profitable and gracious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule. So haue I laboured to doe in the person of Arthure: whome I conceive, after his long education by Timon, to whom he was by Merlin delivered to be brought up, so soone as he was borne of the Lady Igrayne, to have seene in a dream or vision the Faery Queen, with whose excellent beauty ravished, he awaking resolved to seeke her out; and so being by Merlin armed, and by Timon thoroughly instructed, he went to seeke her forth in Faerye land. In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land. And yet, in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royall Queene or Emprise, the other of a most vertuous and beautiful Lady, this latter part in some places I doe expresse in Belpheobe, fashioning her name according to your owne excellent concept of Cynthia, (Phoebe and Cynthia being both names of Diana.) So in the person of Prince Arthure I sette forth magnificence in particular; which vertue, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and containeth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deedes of Arthure

applyable to that vertue, which I write of in that booke. But of the xii. other vertues, I make xii. other knights the patrones, for the more variety of the history: Of which these three bookes contain three.

The first of the knight of the Redcrosse, in whome I expresse Holynes: The seconde of Sir Guyon, in whome I sette forth Temperaunce: The third of Britomartis, a Lady Knight, in whome I picture Chastity. But, because the beginning of the whole worke seemeth abrupte, and as depending upon other antecedents, it needs that ye know the occasion of these three knights seuerall adventures. For the Methode of a Poet historical is not such, as of an Historiographer. For an Historiographer discourseth of affayres orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the times as the actions; but a Poet thrusteth into the midst, even where it most concerneth him, and there recouring to the thinges forepaste, and divining of thinges to come, maketh a pleasing Analysis of all.

The beginning therefore of my history, if it were to be told by an Historiographer should be the twelfth booke, which is the last; where I devise that the Faery Queene kept her Annuall feaste xii. dayes; upon which xii. severall dayes, the occasions of the xii. severall adventures hapned, which, being undertaken by xii. severall knights, are in these xii. books severally handled and discoursed. The first was this. In the beginning of the feast, there presented him selfe a tall clownishe younge man, who falling before the Queene of Faries desired a boone (as the manner then was) which during that feast she might not refuse; which was that hee might have the atchievement of any adventure, which during that feaste should happen: that being graunted, he rested him on the floore, unfitte through his rusticity for a better place. Soone after entred a faire Ladye in mourning weedes, riding on a white Asse, with a dwarfe behind her leading a warlike steed, that bore the Armes of a knight, and his speare in the dwarfes hand. Shee, falling before the Queene of Faeries, complained that her father and mother, an ancient King and Queene, had bene by an huge dragon many years shut up in a brasen Castle, who thence suffred them not to yssew; and therefore besought the Faery Queene to assygne her some one of her knights to take on him that employt. Presently that clownish person, upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queene much wondering, and the Lady much gainesaying, yet he ear-

¹ Of the twelve books planned Spenser completed only six and part of the seventh.

nestly importuned his desire. In the end the Lady told him, that unlesse that armour which she brought, would serve him (that is, the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul, vi. Ephes.) that he could not succeed in that enterprise; which being forthwith put upon him, with dewe furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in al that company, and was well liked of the Lady. And eftesonnes taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that straunge Courser, he went forth with her on that adventure: where beginneth the first booke, viz.

A gentle knight was pricking on the playne. &c.

The second day ther came in a Palmer, bearing an Infant with bloody hands, whose Parents he complained to have bene slayn by an Enchaunteresse called Acrasia; and therfore craved of the Faery Queene, to appoint him some knight to performe that adventure; which being assigned to Sir Guyon, he presently went forth with that same Palmer: which is the beginning of the second booke, and the whole subject thereof. The third day there came in a Groome, who complained before the Faery Queene, that a vile Enchanter, called Busirane, had in hand a most faire Lady, called Amoretta, whom he kept in most grievous torment, because she would not yield him the pleasure of her body. Whereupon Sir Scudamour, the lover of that Lady, presently tooke on him that adventure. But being vnable to performe it by reason of the hard Enchauntments, after long sorrow, in the end met with Britomartis, who succoured him, and reskewed his loue.

But by occasion hereof many other adventures are intermedled; but rather as Accidents then intendments: As the love of Britomart, the overthrow of Marinell, the misery of Florimell, the vertuousnes of Belphœbe, the lasciviousnes of Hellenora, and many the like.

Thus much, Sir, I have briefly overronne to direct your understanding to the wel-head of the History; that from thence gathering the whole intention of the conceit, ye may as in a handfull gripe al the discourse, which otherwise may happily seeme tedious and confused. So, humbly craving the continuance of your honorable favour towards me, and th' eternall establishment of your happiness, I humbly take leave.

23. January 1589,

Yours most humbly affectionate,

ED. SPENSER.

THE FIRST BOOK

OF

THE FAERIE QUEENE

CONTAYNING THE LEGEND OF THE
KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSSE,
OR OF HOLINESSE

I

Lo! I, the man whose Muse whylome ¹ did
maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shephards
weeds,²

¹⁵ Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to change mine Oaten
reeds,
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle
deeds; ⁵
²⁰ Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds ³
To blazon broad eamongst her learned
throng:
Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moral-
ize my song.

2

Helpe then, O holy virgin! chiefe of
nyne,⁴ ¹⁰
³⁰ Thy weaker Novice to performe thy will;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne ⁵
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden
still,
Of Faerie knights, and fayrest Tanaquill,⁶
Whom that most noble Briton Prince ⁷ so
long ¹⁵
Sought through the world, and suffered so
much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong:
⁴⁰ O, helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my
dull tong!

3

And thou, most dreaded impe ⁸ of highest
Jove,
Faie Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart ²⁰
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart;
Lay now thy deadly Heben ⁹ bowe apart,
⁵⁰ And with thy mother mylde come to mine
ayde;

¹ formerly.

² An obvious reference to Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, published eleven years previously.

³ designates.

⁴ Clio, the muse of history.

⁵ desk.

⁶ Daughter of Oberon, king of the fairies; here, of course, Queen Elizabeth.

⁷ Arthur; here, possibly, the Earl of Leicester.

⁸ child; i.e., Cupid.

⁹ ebon; ebony.

Come, both; and with you bring triumphant
Mart,¹ 25
In loves and gentle jollities arraid,
After his murderous spoyles and bloudie rage
allayd.

4
And with them eke, O Goddess² heavenly
bright!
Mirrour of grace and Majestie divine,
Great Ladie of the greatest Isle, whose
light 30
Like Phœbus lampe throughout the world
doth shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughtes, too humble and too
vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted³ stile: 35
The which to heare vouchsafe, O dearest
dread,⁴ a-while!

CANTO I

The Patrone of true Holinesse
Foule Errour doth defeate:
Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,
Doth to his home entreate.

1
A gentle Knight was pricking⁵ on the
plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein od dints of deepe woundes did re-
maine,
The cruell markes of many' a bloody field;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield. 5
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdainyng to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly⁶ knight he seemd, and faire did
sitt,
As one for knightly giusts⁷ and fierce en-
counters fitt.

2
And on his brest a bloodie Crosse he bore, 10
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he
wore,
And dead, as living, ever him ador'd:
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For sovaine hope⁸ which in his helpe he
had. 15
Right faithfull true he was in deede and
word,

1 Mars. 2 Queen Elizabeth. 3 humble.
4 object worshiped. 5 riding, using the spur.
6 handsome. 7 jousts.
8 "to indicate the great hope that he had."

But of his cheere¹ did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was
ydrad.²

3
Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana³ to him gave, 20
(That greatest Glorious Queene of Faery
lond)
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to
have,
Which of all earthly thinges he most did
crave:
And ever as he rode, his hart did earne⁴
To prove his puissance in battell brave 25
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne,
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

4
A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
Yet she much whiter; but the same did
hide 30
Under a vele, that wimpled⁵ was full low;
And over all a blacke stole shee did throw;
As one that inly mournd, so was she sad,
And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow;
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had, 35
And by her, in a line, a milkewhite lambe she
lad.

5
So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore;
And by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kinges and Queenes, that had of
yore 40
Their scepters stretcht from East to Western
shore,
And all the world in their subjection held;
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forewasted⁶ all their land, and them
expeld;
Whom to avenge she had this Knight from
far compeld.⁷ 45

6
Behind her farre away a Dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd, in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they
past,
The day with cludes was suddeine over-
cast, 50
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine

1 countenance. 2 The past participle, dreaded.
3 Queen Elizabeth. 4 yearn. 5 folded.
6 The prefix fore — is intensive. 7 summoned.

Did poure into his Lemans ¹ lap ² so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd ³ it did constrain;
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves
were fain.

7

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at
hand, ⁵⁵
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand;
Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride,
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did
hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr: ⁶⁰
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr.
Faure harbour that them seems, so in they
entred ar.

8

And fourth they passe, with pleasure for-
ward led,
Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony, ⁶⁵
Which, therein shrouded from the tempest
dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight
and hy,
The sayling Pine; the Cedar proud and tall;
The vine-propp Elme; the Poplar never
dry; ⁷⁰
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all;
The Aspine good for staves; the Cypresse
funerall;

9

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours
And Poets sage; the Firre that weepeth still;
The Willow, worne of forlorne Paramours; ⁷⁵
The Eugh, obedient to the benders will;
The Birch for shaftes; the Sallow ⁴ for the
mill;
The Mirrhe sweete-bleeding in the bitter
wound;
The warlike Beech; the Ash for nothing ill;
The fruitfull Olive; and the Platane ⁵
round; ⁸⁰
The carver Holme; ⁶ the Maple seeldom in-
ward sound.

10

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Untill the blustering storme is overblowne;
When, weening ⁷ to returne whence they did
stray,

They cannot finde that path, which first was
showne, ⁸⁵
But wander too and fro in waies unknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they neereest
weene,

That makes them doubt ¹ their wits be not
their owne:
So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
That which of them to take in diverse doubt
they been. ⁹⁰

11

At last resolving forward still to fare,
Till that some end they finde, or in or out,
That path they take that beaten seemd most
bare,
And like to lead the labyrinth about; ²
Which when by tract they hunted had
throughout, ⁹⁵
At length it brought them to a hollowe cave
Amid the thickest woods. The Champion
stout
Eftsoones ³ dismounted from his courser
brave,
And to the Dwarfe a while his needlesse spere
he gave.

12

"Be well aware," quoth then that Ladie
milde, ¹⁰⁰
"Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash pro-
voke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and
wilde,
Breedes dreadfull doubts. Oft fire is without
smoke,
And perill without show: therefore your
stroke,
Sir Knight, with-hold, till further tryall
made." ¹⁰⁵
"Ah Ladie," (sayd he) "shame were to
revoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light through dark-
nesse for to wade."

13

"Yea but" (quoth she) "the perill of this
place
I better wot then you: though nowe too
late ¹¹⁰
To wish you backe returne with foule dis-
grace,
Yet wisdomed warnes, whilst foot is in the
gate,⁴
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.

¹ beloved's.² the earth.³ take cover.⁴ broad-leaved willow.⁵ plane-tree.⁶ oak.⁷ supposing.¹ fear.² out of.³ immediately.⁴ path.

This is the wandering wood, this *Errours* den,
 A monster vile, whom God and man does
 hate:
 Therefore I read ¹¹⁵ "beware." "Fly, fly!"
 (quoth then
 The fearefull Dwarf) "this is no place for
 living men."

14

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment,
 The youthfull Knight could not for ought be
 staide;
 But forth unto the darksom hole he went, ¹²⁰
 And looked in: his glistring armour made
 A litle glooming light, much like a shade;
 By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
 Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
 But th'other halfe did womans shape re-
 taine, ¹²⁵
 Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile
 disdaine.

15

And, as she lay upon the durty ground,
 Her huge long taile her den all overspred,
 Yet was in knots and many boughtes ² up-
 wound,
 Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there
 bred ¹³⁰
 A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,
 Sucking upon her poisonous dugs; each one
 Of sundrie shapes, yet all ill-favored: ³
 Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone,
 Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all
 were gone. ¹³⁵

16

Their dam upstart out of her den effraide,
 And rushed forth, hurling her hideous taile
 About her cursed head; whose folds displaid
 Were stretcht now forth at length without en-
 traile.⁴
 She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle, ¹⁴⁰
 Armed to point, sought backe to turne againe;
 For light she hated as the deadly bale,⁵
 Ay wont ⁶ in desert darknes to remaine,
 Where plain none might her see, nor she see
 any plaine.

17

Which when the valiant Elfe ⁷ perceiv'd,
 he lept ¹⁴⁵
 As Lyon fierce upon the flying pray,
 And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept
 From turning backe, and forced her to stay:

1 advise. 2 coils. 3 of ugly face.
 4 coil. 5 destruction. 6 always accustomed.
 7 The Redcross Knight was the son of an elf.

Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
 And turning fierce her speckled taile ad-
 vaunst, ¹⁵⁰
 Threatning her angrie sting, him to dismay;
 Who, nought aghast, his mightie hand en-
 haunst:¹
 The stroke down from her head unto her
 shoulder glaunst.

18

Much daunted with that dint her sence
 was dazd;
 Yet kindling rage her selfe she gathered
 round, ¹⁵⁵
 And all attonce her beastly bodie raizd
 With doubled forces high above the ground:
 Tho, wrapping up her wretched sterne
 arownd,
 Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge
 traine
 All suddenly about his body wound, ¹⁶⁰
 That hand or foot to stirr he strove in
 vaine.
 God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours end-
 lesse traine!

19

His Lady, sad to see his sore constraint,
 Cride out, "Now, now, Sir knight, shew
 what ye bee:
 Add faith unto your force, and be not
 faint; ¹⁶⁵
 Strangle her, els she sure will strangle thee."
 That when he heard, in great perplexitie,
 His gall did grate ² for grieve ³ and high dis-
 daine;
 And, knitting all his force, got one hand free,
 Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great
 paine, ¹⁷⁰
 That soone to loose her wicked bands did her
 constraine.

20

Therewith she spewd out of her filthie
 maw ⁴
 A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,
 Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets ⁵
 raw,
 Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him
 slacke ¹⁷⁵
 His grasping hold, and from her turne him
 backe.
 Her vomit full of bookes and papers ⁶ was,
 With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes
 did lacke,

1 raised. 2 stir. 3 pain. 4 stomach.
 5 pieces.
 6 The attacks against Queen Elizabeth and the Church
 of England.

And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
Her filthie parbreake¹ all the place defiled
has. 180

21

As when old father Nilus gins to swell
With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale
His fattie waves doe fertile slime outwell,
And overflow each plaine and lowly dale:
But, when his later spring gins to avale,² 185
Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherin there
breed

Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male
And partly femall, of his fruitfull seed;
Such ugly monstrous shapes elswher may no
man reed.³

22

The same so sore annoyed has the
knight, 190
That, welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, ne can no lenger fight
Whose corage when the feend perceivd to
shrinke,
She poured forth out of her hellish sinke
Her fruitfull cursed spawne of serpents
small, 195
Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as
inke,
Which swarming all about his legs did crall,
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt
at all.

23

As gentle shepheard in sweete eventide,
When ruddy Phebus gins to welke⁴ in
west, 200
High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide,
Markes which doe byte their hasty supper
best;
A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him molest,
All striving to infixe their feeble stinges,
That from their noyance he no where can
rest; 205
But with his clownish hands their tender
wings
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their
murmurings.

24

Thus ill bestedd,⁵ and fearefull more of
shame
Then of the certeine perill he stood in
Halfe furious unto his foe he came, 210
Resolvd in minde all suddenly to win,
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;⁶

1 vomit.
5 placed.

2 moderate.
6 stop.

3 see.

4 wane.

And stroke at her with more then manly
force,
That from her body, full of filthie sin,
He raft⁷ her hatefull heade without re-
morse: 215

A streame of cole-black blood forth gushed
from her corse.

25

Her scattered brood, soone as their Parent
deare

They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare
Gathred themselves about her body round, 220
Weening their wonted entrance to have found
At her wide mouth; but being there with-
stood,

They flocked all about her bleeding wound,
And sucked up their dying mothers bloud,
Making her death their life, and eke her hurt
their good. 225

26

That detestable sight him much amazde,
To see th' unkindly⁸ Impes, of heaven
accurst,

Devoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,
Having all satisfide their bloody thirst,
Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse
burst, 230

And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end
Of such as drunke her life the which them
nurst¹

Now needeth him no lenger labour spend,
His foes have slaine themselves, with whom
he should contend.

27

His Lady, seeing all that chaunst from
farre, 235

Approcht in hast to greet his victorie;
And saide, "Faire knight, borne under happie
starre,

Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye,
Well worthie be you of that Armory,
Wherein ye have great glory wonne this
day, 240

And proov'd your strength on a strong
enime,

Your first adventure: many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish that like succeed
it may!"

28

Then mounted he upon his Steede againe,
And with the Lady backward sought to
wend.

1 took away.

2 unnatural.

245

That path he kept which beaten was most
 plaine,
 Ne ever would to any byway bend,
 But still did follow one unto the end,
 The which at last out of the wood them
 brought.
 So forward on his way (with God to frend) ²⁵⁰
 He passed forth, and new adventure sought:
 Long way he traueiled before he heard of
 ought.

29

At length they chaunst to meet upon the
 way
 An aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
 His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie
 gray, ²⁵⁵
 And by his belt his booke he hanging had:
 Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
 And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
 Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad;
 And all the way he prayed as he went, ²⁶⁰
 And often knockt his brest, as one that did
 repent.

30

He faire the knight saluted, louting ¹ low,
 Who faire him quited, as that courteous
 was;
 And after asked him, if he did know
 Of straunge adventures, which abroad did
 pas, ²⁶⁵
 "Ah! my dear sonne," (quoth he) "how
 should, alas!
 Silly ² old man, that lives in hidden cell,
 Bidding ³ his beades all day for his trespas,
 Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
 With holy father sits not ⁴ with such thinges
 to mell.⁵ ²⁷⁰

31

"But if of daunger, which hereby doth
 dwell,
 And homebredd evil ye desire to heare,
 Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
 That wasteth all this countrie, farre and
 neare."
 "Of such," (saide he,) "I chiefly doe in-
 quere, ²⁷⁵
 And shall thee well rewarde to shew the
 place,
 In which that wicked wight his dayes doth
 weare;
 For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
 That such a cursed creature lives so long a
 space."

¹ bending.
⁴ is not fitting.

² simple.
⁵ meddle.

³ telling.

³²
 "Far hence" (quoth he) "in wastfull wil-
 dernesse ²⁸⁰
 His dwelling is, by which no living wight
 May ever passe, but thorough great dis-
 tresse."
 "Now," (saide the Ladie,) "draweth toward
 night,
 And well I wote, that of your later fight
 Ye all forwearied be; for what so strong, ²⁸⁵
 But, wanting rest, will also want of might?
 The Sunne, that measures heaven all day
 long,
 At night doth baite ¹ his steedes the Ocean
 waves emong.

33

"Then with the Sunne take, Sir, your
 timely rest,
 And with new day new worke at once
 begin: ²⁹⁰
 Untroubled night, they say, gives counsell
 best."
 "Right well, Sir knight, ye have advised
 bin,"
 Quoth then that aged man: "the way to win
 Is wisely to advise; now day is spent:
 Therefore with me ye may take up your
 In ²⁹⁵
 For this same night." The knight was well
 content;
 So with that godly father to his home they
 went.

34

A litle lowly Hermitage it was,
 Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
 Far from resort of people that did pas ³⁰⁰
 In traueill to and froe: a litle wyde ²
 There was an holy chappell edifyde,³
 Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
 His holy thinges each morne and eventyde:
 Thereby a christall streame did gently
 play, ³⁰⁵
 Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth
 alway.

35

Arrived there, the litle house they fill,
 Ne looke for entertainment where none was;
 Rest is their feast, and all thinges at their
 will:
 The noblest mind the best contentment
 has. ³¹⁰
 With faire discourse the evening so they pas;
 For that olde man of pleasing wordes had
 store,

¹ refresh.

² apart.

³ built.

And well could file his tongue as smooth as
 glas:
 He told of Saintes and Popes,¹ and ever-
 more
 He strowd an *Ave-Mary* after and before. 315

36

The drouping night thus creepeth on them
 fast;
 And the sad² humor³ loading their eyeliddes,
 As messenger of Morpheus on them cast
 Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleep
 them biddes.
 Unto their lodgings then his gwestes he
 riddes:⁴ 320
 Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he
 findes,
 He to his studie goes; and there amidde
 His magick bookes, and artes of sundrie
 kindes,
 He seekes out mighty charmes to trouble
 sleepey minds.

37

Then choosing out few words most hor-
 rible, 325
 (Let none them read) thereof did verses
 frame;
 With which, and other spelles like terrible,
 He bad awake blacke Plutoes griesly Dame;⁵
 And cursd heven; and spake reprochful
 shame
 Of highest God, the Lord of life and light: 330
 A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by
 name
 Great Gorgon,⁶ prince of darknes and dead
 night;
 At which Cocytus⁷ quakes, and Styx⁷ is put
 to flight.

38

And forth he cald out of deepe darknes
 dredd
 Legions of Sprights, the which, like litle
 flies 335
 Fluttering about his ever-damned hedd,
 Awaite whereto their service he applies,
 To aide his friendes, or fray⁸ his enimies.
 Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo,
 And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes: 340
 The one of them he gave a message too,
 The other by him selfe staide, other worke to
 doo.

¹ The old man, Archimago, who typifies hypocrisy, is also a Catholic.

² heavy.

³ dampness.

⁴ dismisses.

⁵ Proserpine.

⁶ Demogorgon, a demon magician of the underworld, whose name few dared to mention.

⁷ Rivers in Hades.

⁸ frighten.

39

He, making speedy way through spersed¹
 ayre,
 And through the world of waters wide and
 deepe,
 To Morpheus house doth hastily repaire. 345
 Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,
 And low, where dawning day doth never
 peepe,
 His dwelling is; there Tethys² his wet bed
 Doth ever wash, and Cynthia³ still doth
 steepe
 In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed, 350
 Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black
 doth spread

40

Whose double gates he findeth locked
 fast,
 The one faire fram'd of burnisht Yvory,
 The other all with silver overcast;
 And wakeful dogges before them farre doe
 lye, 355
 Watching to banish Care their enemy,
 Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe.
 By them the Sprite doth passe in quietly,
 And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned
 deepe
 In drowseie fit he findes: of nothing he takes
 keepe.⁴ 360

41

And more to lulle him in his slumber soft,
 A trickling streame from high rock tumbling
 downe,
 And ever-drizzling raine upon the loft,⁵
 Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like
 the sowne
 Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a
 swowne. 365
 No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cries,
 As still are wont t'annoy the walled towne,
 Might there be heard; but carelesse Quiet
 lyes
 Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimyes.

42

The Messenger approching to him
 spake; 370
 But his waste wordes retourn'd to him in
 vaine:
 So sound he slept, that nought mought him
 awake.
 Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with
 paine,
 Whereat he gan to stretch; but he againe

¹ dispersed.
⁴ heed.

² The ocean.
⁵ upper floor.

³ The moon.

Shooke him so hard, that forced him to
speake. 375
As one then in a dreame, whose dryer¹
braine
Is tost with troubled sights and fancies
weake,
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence
breake.

43

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to
wake,
And threatned unto him the dreaded
name 380
Of Hecate:² whereat he gan to quake,
And, lifting up his lompish³ head, with blame
Halfe angrie asked him, for what he came.
"Hether" (quothe he,) "me Archimago sent,
He that the stubborne Sprites can wisely
tame, 385
He bids thee to him send for his intent
A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleep-
ers sent."⁴

44

The God obayde; and, calling forth
straight way
A diverse⁵ Dreame out of his prison darke,
Delivered it to him, and downe did lay 390
His heaue head, deuoid of careful carke;⁶
Whose sences all were straight benumbd and
starke.
He, backe returning by the Yvorie dore,
Remounted up as light as chearefull Larke;
And on his litle winges the dreame he bore 395
In hast unto his Lord, where he him left afore.

45

Who all this while, with charmes and
hidden artes,
Had made a Lady of that other Spright,
And fram'd of liquid ayre her tender partes,
So lively and so like in all mens sight, 400
That weaker sence it could have ravisht
quight:
The maker selfe, for all his wondrous witt,
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight.
Her all in white he clad, and over it
Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for
Una fit. 405

46

Now, when that ydle dreame was to him
brought,
Unto that Elfin knight he bad him fly,

Where he slept soundly void of evil thought,
And with false shewes abuse his fantasy,
In sort as¹ he him schooled prively: 410
And that new creature, borne without her
dew,²

Full of the makers guyle, with usage sly
He taught to imitate that Lady trew,
Whose semblance she did carrie under
feigned hew.

47

Thus well instructed, to their worke they
hast, 415
And comming where the knight in slomber
lay,
The one upon his hardy head him plast,
And made him dreame of loves and lustfull
play,
That nigh his manly hart did melt away,
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked ioy: 420
Then seemed him his Lady by him lay,
And to him playnd, how that false winged boy
Her chast hart had subdewd, to learne Dame
pleasures toy.

48

And she her selfe of beautie soveraigne
Queene,
Faire Venus seemde unto his bed to bring 425
Her, whom he waking evermore did weene
To be the chastest flowre, that ay did spring
On earthly braunch, the daughter of a king,
Now a loose Leman to vile service bound:
And eke the Graces seemed all to sing, 430
Hymen iô Hymen, dauncing all around,
Whilst freshest Flora her with Yuie girdlond
crownd.

49

In this great passion of unwonted lust,
Or wonted feare of doing ought amis,
He started up, as seeming to mistrust 435
Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his:
Lo there before his face his Lady is,
Under blake stole hyding her bayted hooke,
And as halfe blushing offred him to kis,
With gentle blandishment and lovely
looke, 440
Most like that virgin true, which for her
knight him took.

50

All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight,
And halfe enraged at her shamelesse guise,
He thought have slaine her in his fierce
despight:³

1 A damp brain was supposed to be more active.
2 Underworld goddess of magic. 3 heavy.
4 sense. 5 misleading. 6 worry.

1 in the way that.
2 due, i.e., unnaturally. 3 anger.

But hasty heat tempring with sufferance
wise, 445
He stayde his hand, and gan himselfe advise
To prove his sense, and tempt her faigned
truth.

Wringing her hands in wemens pitteous wise,
Tho¹ can² she weepe, to stirre up gentle
ruth,³

Both for her noble bloud, and for her tender
youth. 450

51

And said, Ah Sir, my liege Lord and my
love,

Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,
And mightie causes wrought in heaven above,
Or the blind God, that doth me thus amate,⁴
For hoped love to winne me certaine hate? 455
Yet thus perforce he bids me do; or die.

Die is my dew: yet rew my wretched state
You, whom my hard avenging destinie
Hath made iudge of my life or death indif-
ferently.

52

Your owne deare sake forst me at first to
leave 460

My Fathers kingdome, There she stopt with
teares;

Her swollen hart her speach seemd to be-
reave,

And then againe begun, My weaker yeares
Captiv'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
Fly to your faith for succour and sure ayde:
Let me not dye in languor and long teares.

Why Dame (quoth he) what hath ye thus
dismayd? 467

What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort
me affrayd?

53

Love of your selfe, she said, and deare con-
straint⁵

Lets me not sleepe, but wast the wearie
night 470

In secret anguish and unpittied plaint,
Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drowned
quight.

Her doubtfull words made that redouted
knight

Suspect her truth: yet since no'untruth he
knew,

Her fawning love with foule disdainfull
spight 475

He would not shend,⁶ but said, Deare dame
I rew,

That for my sake unknowne such grieve unto
you grew.

54

Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;
For all so deare as life is to my hart,
I deeme your love, and hold me to you
bound; 480

Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse
smart,

Where cause is none, but to your rest depart.
Not all content, yet seemd she to appease¹

Her mournfull plaintes, beguiled of her
art,

And fed with words, that could not chuse but
please, 485

So syldng softly forth, she turnd as to her
ease.

55

Long after lay he musing at her mood,
Much grieu'd to thinke that gentle Dame so
light,

For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
At last dull wearinesse of former fight 490

Having yrockt a sleepe his irkesome spright,
That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse his
braine,

With bowres, and beds, and Ladies deare
delight:

But when he saw his labour all was vaine,
With that misformed spright he backe re-
turnd againe. 495

CANTO II

The guilefull great Enchanter parts
The Redcrosse Knight from Truth:
Into whose stead faire falshood steps,
And workes him woefull ruth.

I

By this the Northerne wagoner² had set
His sevenfold teme³ behind the stedfast
starre⁴

That was in Ocean waves yet never wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
To al that in the wide deepe wandring arre; ⁵
And chearefull Chaunticlere with his note
shrill

Had warnd once, that Phoebus fiery carre
In hast was climbing up the Easterne hill,
Full envious that night so long his roome did
fill:

1 cease.

2 The northern constellation of Boötes, which contains the bright star Arcturus.

3 The seven stars of the Dipper or Charles's Wain in Ursa Major.

4 Polaris, the North Star.

1 then.
4 discourge.2 did.
5 necessity.3 pity.
6 reproach.

2

When those accursed messengers of hell, ¹⁰
That feigning dreame, and that faire-forged
Spright,
Came to their wicked maister, and gan tel
Their bootelesse paines, and ill succeeding
night:

Who, in all rage to see his skilfull might
Deluded so, gan threaten hellish paine, ¹⁵
And sad Proserpines wrath, them to affright:
But, when he saw his threatning was but
vaine,
He cast about, and searcht his baleful bokes
againe.

3

Eftsoones he tooke that miscreated faire,
And that false other Spright, on whom he
spred ²⁰

A seeming body of the subtile aire,
Like a young Squire, in loves and lusty-hed
His wanton dayes that ever loosely led,
Without regard of armes and dreaded fight:
Those two he tooke, and in a secret bed, ²⁵
Covered with darknesse and misdeeming ¹
night,
Them both together laid, to ioy in vaine
delight.

4

Forthwith he runnes with feigned faithfull
hast
Unto his guest, who after troublous sights
And dreames, gan now to take more sound
repast, ³⁰
Whom suddenly he wakes with fearefull
frights,
As one ag hast with feends or damned sprights,
And to him cals, Rise rise unhappy Swaine,
That here wex old in sleepe, whiles wicked
wights
Have knit themselves in Venus shamefull
chaine; ³⁵
Come see, where your false Lady doth her
honour staine.

5

All in amaze he suddenly up start
With sword in hand, and with the old man
went;
Who soone him brought into a secret part,
Where that false couple were full closely
ment ² ⁴⁰
In wanton lust and lewd embracement:
Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous
fire,
The eye of reason was with rage yblent, ³

1 misleading.

2 mingled.

3 blinded.

And would have slaine them in his furious
ire,
But hardly was restrained of that aged
sire. ⁴⁵

6

Returning to his bed in torment great,
And bitter anguish of his guiltie sight,
He could not rest, but did his stout heart eat,
And wast his inward gall with deepe despight,
Yrkesome of life, and too long lingring
night. ⁵⁰

At last faire Hesperus in highest skie
Had spent his lampe, and brought forth
dawning light
Then up he rose, and clad him hastily;
The Dwarfes him brought his steed: so both
away do fly.

7

Now when the rosy fingred Morning
faire, ⁵⁵

Weary of aged Tithones ¹ saffron bed,
Had spred her purple robe through dewy
aire,
And the high hills Titan ² discovered,
The royall virgin shooke off drousy-hed; ³
And, rising forth out of her baser bowre, ⁶⁰
Lookt for her knight, who far away was fled,
And for her dwarfes, that wont to wait each
howre:

Then gan she wail and weepe to see that
woeful stowre. ⁴

8

And after him she rode with so much
speede
As her slowe beast could make; but all in
vaine, ⁶⁵
For him so far had borne his light-foot
steede,
Pricked with wrath and fiery fierce disdaine,
That him to follow was but fruitlesse paine:
Yet she her weary limbes would never rest;
But every hil and dale, each wood and
plaine, ⁷⁰
Did search, sore grieved in her gentle brest,
He so ungently left her, whome she loved
best.

9

But subtile Archimago, when his guests
He saw divided into double parts,
And Una wandring in woods and forrests, ⁷⁵

¹ Tithonus, beloved of Morning (Aurora), who gave
him immortality, forgetting eternal youth.

² the sun.³ The suffix -hed = -ness or -hood⁴ affliction.

Th' end of his drift, he praisd his diuinish arts
That had such might over true meaning
harts;

Yet rests not so, but other meanes doth make,
How he may worke unto her further smartes;
For her he hated as the hissing snake, 80
And in her many troubles did most pleasure
take.

10

He then devisde himselfe how to disguise;
For by his mighty science he could take
As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,
As ever Proteus ¹ to himselfe could make: 85
Sometime a fowle, sometime a fish in lake,
Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell;
That of himselfe he ofte for feare would
quake,
And oft would flie away. O! who can tell
The hidden powre of herbes, and might of
Magick spell? 90

11

But now seemde best the person to put on
Of that good knight, his late beguiled guest:
In mighty armes he was yclad anon,
And silver shield; upon his coward brest
A bloody crosse, and on his craven crest 95
A bounch of heares discoloured diversly.
Full jolly knight he seemde, and wel address;
And when he sate upon his courser free,
Saint George ² himselfe ye would have
deemed him to be.

12

But he, the knight whose semblaunt he
did beare, 100
The true Saint George, was wandred far
away,
Still flying from his thoughts and gealous
feare:
Will was his guide, and grieve led him astray.
At last him chaunst to meete upon the way
A faithlesse Sarazin,³ all armed to point, 105
In whose great shield was writ with letters
gay
Sans foy; full large of limbe and every joint
He was, and cared not for God or man a
point.⁴

13

Hee had a faire companion ⁵ of his way,
A goodly Lady clad in scarlot red, 110
Purfled ⁶ with gold and pearle of rich assay;

¹ The sea-god who could change his shape at will.

² Patron saint of England.

³ i.e., a heathen. ⁴ whit.

⁵ Duessa or Fidessa, representing Falsehood.

⁶ embroidered along the edge.

And like a Persian mitre on her hed
Shee wore, with crowns and owches ¹ gar-
nished,

The which her lavish lovers to her gave.
Her wanton palfrey all was overspred 115
With tinsell trappings, woven like a wave,
Whose bridle rung with golden bells and
bosses ² brave.

14

With faire disport, and courting dalliaunce,
She intertaine her lover all the way;
But, when she saw the knight his speare ad-
vaunce, 120
She soone left off her mirth and wanton play,
And bad her knight addresse him to the fray,
His foe was nigh at hand. He, pricke with
pride
And hope to winne his Ladies hearte that day,
Forth spurred fast: adowne his coursers
side 125
The red blood trickling stained the way, as he
did ride.

15

The knight of the Redcrosse, when him he
spide
Spurring so hote with rage dispiteous,
Gan fairely couch his speare, and towards
ride.
Soone meete they both, both fell and furi-
ous, 130
That, daunted with theyr forces hideous,
Their steeds doe stagger, and amazed stand;
And eke themselves, too rudely rigorous,
Astonied with the stroke of their owne
hand,
Doe backe rebutte,³ and ech to other yeald-
eth land. 135

16

As when two rams, stird with ambitious
pride,
Fight for the rule of the rich fleeced flocke,
Their horned fronts so fierce on either side
Doe meete, that, with the terror of the shooke,
Astonied, both stand sencelesse as a
blocke, 140
Forgetfull of the hanging victory:
So stood these twaine, unmoved as a rocke,
Both staring fierce, and holding idly
The broken reliques of their former cruelty.

17

The Sarazin, sore daunted with the
bufe, 145
Snatcheth his sword, and fiercely to him flies;

¹ jewels. ² ornamental protuberances. ³ recoil.

Who well it wards, and quytesth ¹ cuff with
cuff:

Each others equall puissaunce envies,
And through their iron sides with cruell
spies

Does seeke to perce; ² repining courage
yields 150

No foote to foe; the flashing fier flies,
As from a forge, out of their burning shields;
And streams of purple bloud new die the
verdant fields.

18

"Curse on that Cross," (quoth then the
Sarazin,)

"That keepes thy body from the bitter
fitt! ³ 155

Dead long ygoe, I wote, thou haddest bin,
Had not that charme from thee forwarned
itt:

But yet I warne thee now assured sitt,
And hide thy head." ⁴ Therewith upon his
crest

With rigor so outrageous he smitt, 160
That a large share it hewd out of the rest,
And glauncing downe his shield from blame ⁵
him fairly blest. ⁶

19

Who, thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping
spark

Of native vertue gan eftsoones revive;
And at his haughty helmet making mark, 165
So hugely stroke, that it the steele did rive,
And cleft his head. He, tumbling downe
alive,

With bloody mouth his mother earth did kis,
Greeting his grave: his grudging ⁷ ghost did
strive

With the fraile flesh; at last it flitted is, 170
Whither the soules doe fly of men that live
amis.

20

The Lady, when she saw her champion fall
Like the old ruines of a broken towre,
Staid not to waile his woefull funerall, ⁸
But from him fled away with all her
powre; 175

Who after her as hastily gan scowre, ⁹
Bidding the dwarfe with him to bring away
The Sarazins shield, signe of the conquerour.
Her soone he overtookey, and bad to stay;
For present cause was none of dread her to
dismay. 180

¹ pays. ² i.e., each "looks for an opening."
³ death blow. ⁴ i.e., protect it. ⁵ harm.
⁶ preserved. ⁷ murmuring, complaining.
⁸ death. ⁹ hurry.

21

Shee turning backe, with ruefull ¹ counte-
naunce,

Cride, "Mercy, mercy, Sir, vouchsafe to show
On silly Dame, subject to hard mischaunce,
And to your mighty wil!" Her humblesse
low,

In so ritche weedes, and seeming glorious
show, 185

Did much emmove his stout heroicke heart;
And said, "Deare dame, your suddein over-
throw

Much rueth me; but now put feare apart,
And tel both who ye be, and who that tooke
your part."

22

Melting in teares, then gan shee thus
lament. 190

"The wretched woman, whom unhappy
howre

Hath now made thrall to your commande-
ment,

Before that angry heavens list ² to lowre,
And fortune false betraide me to thy powre,
Was (O! what now availeth that I was?) 195
Borne the sole daughter of an Emperour,
He that the wide West under his rule has,
And high hath set his throne where Tiberis
doth pas.

23

"He, in the first flowre of my freshest age,
Betrothed me unto the onely haire 200
Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage:
Was never Prince so faithfull and so faire,
Was never Prince so meeke and debonaire;
But ere my hoped day of spousall shone,
My dearest Lord fell from high honours
staire 205

Into the hands of hys accursed fone, ³
And cruelly was slaine; that shall I ever mone.

24

"His blessed body, spoild of lively breath,
Was afterward, I know not how, convaidd,
And fro me hid: of whose most innocent
death 210

When tidings came to mee, unhappy maid,
O, how great sorrow my sad soule assaid! ⁴
Then forth I went his woefull corse to find,
And many yeares throughout the world I
straid,

A virgin widow, whose deepe wounded
mind 215

With love long time did languish, as the
stricken hind.

¹ sad. ² pleased. ³ foes. ⁴ attacked.

25

"At last it chaunced this proud Sarazin
To meete me wandring; who perforce me led
With him away, but yet could never win
The fort that ladies hold in soveraigne
dread. 220

There lies he now with foule dishonour dead,
Who, whiles he livde, was called proud Sans
foy,

The eldest of three brethren; all three bred
Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sans joy;
And twixt them both was born the bloudy
bold Sans loy. 225

26

"In this sad plight, friendlesse, unfortun-
ate,

Now miserable I, Fidessa, dwell,
Craving of you, in pittie of my state,
To doe none ill, if please ye not doe well."
He in great passion al this while did dwell, 230
More busying his quicke eies her face to
view,

Then his dull eares to heare what shee did
tell;

And said, "faire lady, hart of flint would rew
The undeserved woes and sorrowes, which ye
shew.

27

"Henceforth in safe assuraunce may ye
rest, 235

Having both found a new friend you to aid,
And lost an old foe that did you molest;
Better new friend then an old foe is said."
With chaunge of chear the seeming simple
maid

Let fal her eien, as shamefast, to the
earth, 240

And yeelding soft, in that she nought gain-
said,

So forth they rode, he feining seemely merth,
And shee coy lookes; so dainty,¹ they say,
maketh derth.²

28

Long time they thus together traveiled;
Til, weary of their way, they came at last 245
Where grew two goodly trees, that faire did
spred

Their armes abroad, with gray mosse over-
cast;

And their greene leaves, trembling with every
blast,

Made a calme shadowe far in compasse
round: 240

The fearefull shepheard, often there aghast,

¹ anything pleasant or desirable.

² desire.

Under them never sat, ne wont there sound
His mery oaten pipe, but shund th' unlucky
ground.

29

But this good knight, soone as he them can
spie,

For the coole shade him thither hastily got:
For golden Phoebus, now ymounted hie, 255
From fiery wheeles of his faire chariot
Hurled his beame so scorching cruell hot,
That living creature mote it not abide;
And his new Lady it endured not.

There they alight, in hope themselves to
hide 260

From the fierce heat, and rest their weary
limbs a tide.¹

30

Faire seemely pleasaunce each to other
makes,

With goodly purposes, there as they sit;
And in his falsed fancy he her takes
To be the fairest wight that lived yit; 265
Which to expresse he bends his gentle wit:
And, thinking of those branches greene to
frame

A girlond for her dainty forehead fit,
He pluckt a bough; out of whose rifte there
came

Smal drops of gory bloud, that trickled down
the same. 270

31

Therewith a piteous yelling voice was
heard,

Crying, "O! spare with guilty hands to teare
My tender sides in this rough rynd embard;²
But fly, ah! fly far hence away, for feare
Least to you hap that happened to me
heare, 275

And to this wretched Lady, my deare love;
O, too deare love, love bought with death too
deare!"

Astond he stood, and up his heare did hove;³
And with that suddein horror could no mem-
ber move.

32

At last whenas the dreadfull passion 280
Was overpast, and manhood well awake,
Yet musing at the straunge occasion,
And doubting much his sence, he thus be-
spake:

"What voice of damned Ghost from Limbo ⁴
lake,

¹ time; cf. *Christmastide*.

³ rise.

² confined.

⁴ the edge of hell.

Or guilefull spright wandering in empty
aire, 285
Both which fraile men doe oftentimes mistake,
Sends to my doubtful eares these speaches
rare,
And ruefull plaints, me bidding guiltlesse
blood to spare?"

33

Then, groning deep; "Nor damned Ghost,"
(quoth he,) 290
"Nor guileful sprite to thee these words doth
speake;
But once a man, Fradubio,¹ now a tree;
Wretched man, wretched tree! whose nature
weake
A cruell witch, her cursed will to wreake,
Hath thus transformd, and plast in open
plaines,
Where Boreas doth blow full bitter
bleake, 295
And scorching Sunne does dry my secret
vaines;
For though a tree I seme, yet cold and heat
me paines."

34

"Say on, Fradubio, then, or man or tree,"
Quoth then the Knight; "by whose mis-
chievous arts
Art thou misshaped thus, as now I see? 300
He oft finds med'cine who his grieve imparts,
But double griefs afflict concealing harts,
As raging flames who striveth to suppress."
"The author then," (said he) "of all my
smarts,
Is one Duessa, a false sorceresse, 305
That many errant knights hath broght to
wretchednesse."

35

"In prime of youthly yeares, when corage
hott
The fire of love, and joy of chevalree,
First kindled in my brest, it was my lott
To love this gentle Lady, whome ye see 310
Now not a Lady, but a seeming tree;
With whome, as once I rode accompanye,
Me chaunced of a knight encountred bee,
That had a like faire Lady by his syde;
Lyke a faire Lady, but did fowle Duessa
hyde. 315

36

"Whose forged beauty he did take in
hand²
All other Dames to have exceeded farre:

1 Doubt. 2 assert.

I in defence of mine did likewise stand,
Mine, that did then shine as the Morning
starre.

So both to batteill fierce arraunged arre, 320
In which his harder fortune was to fall
Under my speare: such is the dye of warre.
His Lady, left as a prise martiall,
Did yield her comely person to be at my call.

37

"So doubly lov'd of ladies, unlike faire, 325
Th' one seeming such, the other such indeede,
One day in doubt I cast for to compare
Whether¹ in beauties glorie did exceede.
A Rosy girlond was the victors meede.
Both seemde to win, and both seemde won to
bee, 330
So hard the discord was to be agreede.
Frælissa was as faire as faire mote bee,
And ever false Duessa seemde as faire as shee."

38

"The wicked witch, now seeing all this
while
The doubtfull ballaunce equally to sway, 335
What not by right she cast to win by guile:
And by her hellish science raisd streight
way
A foggy mist that overcast the day,
And a dull blast, that breathing on her face
Dimmed her former beauties shining ray, 340
And with foule ugly forme did her disgrace:
Then was she fayre alone, when none was
faire in place."

39

"Then cride she out, 'Fye, fye! deformed
wight,
Whose borrowed beautie now appeareth
plaine
To have before bewitched all mens sight: 345
O! leave her soone, or let her soone be slaine.'
Her loathly visage viewing with disdaine,
Eftsoones I thought her such as she me told,
And would have kild her; but with faigned
paine
The false witch did my wrathfull hand with-
hold: 350
So left her, where she now is turnd to treen
mould."

40

"Thensforth I tooke Duessa for my Dame,
And in the witch unweeting joyd long time,
Ne ever wist but that she was the same;
Till on a day (that day is everie Prime,³ 355

1 which of two.
3 springtime.

2 shape of a tree.

When Witches wont do penance for their
crime,)

I chaunst to see her in her proper hew,
Bathing her selfe in origane ¹ and thyme:
A filthy foule old woman I did vew,
That ever to have toucht her I did deadly
rew. 360

41

Her neather partes misshapen, monstrous,
Were hidd in water, that I could not see,
But they did seeme more foule and hideous,
Then womans shape man would believe to
bee.

"Thensforth from her most beastly com-
panie 365

I gan refraine, in minde to slipp away,
Soone as appeard safe opportunitie:
For danger great, if not assurd decay,
I saw before mine eyes, if I were knowne to
stray.

42

"The divelish hag by chaunges of my
cheare 370

Perceiv'd my thought; and, drownd in sleepe
night,

With wicked herbes and oyntments did
besmeare

My body all, through charmes and magicke
might,

That all my senses were bereaved quight:
Then brought she me into this desert
waste, 375

And by my wretched lovers side me pight; ²
Where now, enclosd in wooden wals full
faste,

Banisht from living wights, our wearie daies
we waste."

43

"But how long time," said then the Elfin
knight,

"Are you in this misformed hous to
dwell?" 380

"We may not chaunge," (quoth he,) "this
evill plight,

Till we be bathed in a living ³ well:
That is the terme prescribed by the spell."

"O! how," sayd he, "mote I that well out
find,

That may restore you to your wonted
well?" 385

"Time and suffised ⁴ fates to former kynd ⁵
Shall us restore; none else from hence may
us unbynd."

¹ sweet marjoram.
³ running.

² placed.
⁴ satisfied.

⁵ state.

44

The false Duessa, now Fidessa hight,
Heard how in vaine Fradubio did lament,
And knew well all was true. But the good
knight, 390

Full of sad feare and ghastly dreriment,
When all this speech the living tree had
spent,

The bleeding bough did thrust into the
ground,

That from the blood he might be innocent,
And with fresh clay did close the wooden
wound: 395

Then, turning to his Lady, dead with feare
her fownd.

45

Her seeming dead he fownd with feigned
feare,

As all unweeting of that well she knew;
And paynd himselfe with busie care to reare
Her out of carelesse swowne. Her eyelids
blew, 400

And dimmed sight, with pale and deadly hew,
At last she up gan lift: with trembling cheare
Her up he tooke, (too simple and too trew)
And oft her kist. At length, all passed
feare, ¹

He set her on her steede, and forward forth
did beare. 405

CANTO III

Forsaken Truth long seekes her love,
And makes the Lyon mylde;
Marres blind Devotions mart, ² and fals
In hand of leachour vyld.

I

Nought is there under heav'ns wide hol-
lownesse,

That moves more deare compassion of mind,
Then beautie brought t'unworthie wretched-
nesse

Through envies snares, or fortunes freakes
unkind.

I, whether lately through her brightnes
blynd, ⁵

Or through alleageance, and fast fealty,
Which I do owe unto all womankynd,
Feele my hart perst with so great agony,
When such I see, that all for pitty I could dy.

2

And now it is empassioned so deepe, ¹⁰
For fairest Unaes sake, of whom I sing,
That my frayle eies these lines with teares do
steepe,

¹ all fear past.

² trade.

To thinke how she through guyleful handel-
ing,
Though true as touch,¹ though daughter of
a king,
Though faire as ever living wight was
fayre, ¹⁵
Though not in word nor deede ill meriting,
Is from her knight divorced in despayre,
And her dew loves deryv'd² to that vile
witches shayre.

3

Yet she, most faithfull Ladie, all this while
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd, ²⁰
Far from all peoples preace,³ as in exile,
In wilderness and wastfull deserts strayd,
To seeke her knight; who, subtilly betrayd
Through that late vision which th' En-
chaunter wrought,
Had her abandond. She, of nought
affrayd, ²⁵
Through woods and wastnes wide him daily
sought;
Yet wished tydings none of him unto her
brought.

4

One day, nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,
From her unhastie beast she did alight;
And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay ³⁰
In secrete shadow, far from all mens sight:
From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
And layd her stole aside. Her angels face,
As the great eye of heaven, shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place; ³⁵
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly
grace.

5

It fortun'd, out of the thickest wood
A ramping Lyon rushed suddainly,
Hunting full greedy after salvage⁴ blood.
Soone as the royall virgin he did spy, ⁴⁰
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have attonce devourd her tender core;
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloody rage aswaged with remorse,
And, with the sight amazd, forgot his furious
forse. ⁴⁵

6

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,
As he her wronged innocence did weat.⁵
O, how can beautie maister the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong! ⁵⁰

¹ touchstone.
³ press, large crowd.

² transferred.
⁴ savage. ⁵ know.

Whose yielded pryde and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked
long,
Her hart gan melt in great compassion;
And drizzling teares did shed for pure affec-
tion.

7

"The Lyon, Lord of everie beast in field," ⁵⁵
Quoth she, "his princely puissance doth abate,
And mightie proud to humble weake does
yield,
Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late
Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:
But he, my Lyon, and my noble Lord, ⁶⁰
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
Her, that him lov'd, and ever most adord
As the God of my life? why hath he me
abbord?"

8

Redounding teares did choke th' end of her
plaint,
Which softly ecchœd from the neighbour
wood; ⁶⁵
And, sad to see her sorrowfull constraint,
The kingly beast upon her gazing stood:
With pittie calmd downe fell his angry mood.
At last, in close hart shutting up her payne,
Arose the virgin, borne of heavenly brood, ⁷⁰
And to her snowy Palfrey got agayne,
To seeke her strayed Champion if she might
attayne.

9

The Lyon would not leave her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong gard
Of her chast person, and a faythfull mate ⁷⁵
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:
Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and
ward;
And, when she wakt, he wayted diligent,
With humble service to her will prepar'd:
From her fayre eyes he tooke commande-
ment, ⁸⁰
And ever by her lookes conceived her intent.

10

Long she thus travel'd through deserts
wyde,
By which she thought her wandring knight
shold pas,
Yet never shew of living wight espyde;
Till that at length she found the troden
gras, ⁸⁵
In which the tract of peoples footing was,
Under the steepe foot of a mountaine hore:¹

¹ gray.

The same she follows, till at last she has
A damzel spyde, slow footing her before,
That on her shoulders sad ¹ a pot of water
bore. 90

11

To whom approaching she to her gan call,
To weet if dwelling place were nigh at hand;
But the rude wench her answerd nocht at all:
She could not heare, nor speake, not under-
stand;
Till, seeing by her side the Lyon stand, 95
With suddaine feare her pitcher downe she
threw,
And fled away: for never in that land
Face of fayre Lady she before did vew,
And that dredd Lyons looke her cast in
deadly hew.

12

Full fast she fled, ne ever lookt behynd, 100
As if her life upon the wager lay;
And home she came, whereas ² her mother
blynd
Sate in eternall night: nought could she say;
But, suddaine catching hold, did her dismay
With quaking hands, and other signes of
feare: 105
Who, full of ghastly fright and cold affray,
Gan shut the dore. By this arrived there
Dame Una, weary Dame, and entrance did
requere:

13

Which when none yielded, her unruly Page
With his rude clawes the wicket open
rent, 110
And let her in; where, of his cruell rage
Nigh dead with feare, and faint astonish-
ment,
Shee found them both in darksome corner
pent;
Where that old woman day and night did
pray
Upon her beads, devoutly penitent: 115
Nine hundred *Pater nosters* every day,
And thrise nine hundred *Aves* she was wont
to say.

14

And to augment her painefull penance
more,
Thrise every weeke in ashes shee did sitt,
And next her wrinkled skin rough sackcloth
wore, 120
And thrise three times did fast from any bitt;
But now, for feare her beads she did forgett:

¹ weighed down.² where.

Whose needlesse dread for to remove away,
Faire Una framed words and count'naunce
fitt;

Which hardly doen, at length she gan them
pray, 125

That in their cotage small that night she rest
her may.

15

The day is spent; and commeth drowsie
night,
When every creature shrowded is in sleepe.
Sad Una downe her laies in weary plight,
And at her feete the Lyon watch doth
keepe: 130
In stead of rest she does lament and weepe,
For the late losse of her deare loved knight,
And sighes, and grones, and evermore does
steepe
Her tender brest in bitter teares all night;
All night she thinks too long, and often
lookes for light. 135

16

Now when Aldeboran ¹ was mounted hye
Above the shinie Cassiopeias chaire,²
And all in deadly sleepe did drowned lye
One knocked at the dore, and in would fare:
He knocked fast, and often curst, and
sware, 140
That ready entraunce was not at his call;
For on his backe a heavy load he bare
Of nightly stelhth, and pillage severall,³
Which he had got abroad by purchas crim-
inall.

17

He was, to weete,⁴ a stout and sturdy
thiefe,⁵ 145
Wont to robbe churches of their ornaments,
And poore mens boxes of their due reliefe,
Which given was to them for good intents:
The holy Saints of their rich vestiments
He did disrobe, when all men careless
slept, 150
And spoild the Priests of their habiliments;
Whiles none the holy things in safety kept,
Then he by conning sleights in at the window
crept.

18

And all that he by right or wrong could find,
Unto this house he brought, and did be-
stow 155

¹ Brightest star in Taurus.² The stars in the northern constellation of Cassiopeia resemble a chair.³ various.⁴ to wit.⁵ Kirkrapine, i.e., Church-Plunder.

Upon the daughter of this woman blind,
Abessa,¹ daughter of Corceca ² slow,
With whom he whoredome used, that few did
know,

And fed her fatt with feast of offerings,
And plenty, which in all the land did
grow: 160

Ne spared he to give her gold and rings;
And now he to her brought part of his stolen
things.

19

Thus, long the dore with rage and threats
he bett,³
Yet of those fearfull women none durst
rise.

The Lyon frayed ⁴ them, him in to lett. 165
He would no longer stay him to advize,
But open breakes the dore in furious wize,
And entring is, when that disdainfull beast,
Encountring fierce, him suddein doth sur-
prize;

And, seizing cruell clawes on trembling
brest, 170
Under his Lordly foot him proudly hath
supprest.⁵

20

Him booteth not resist, nor succour call,
His bleeding hart is in the vengers hand;
Who streight him rent in thousand peeces
small,
And quite dismembred hath: the thirsty
land 175

Dronke up his life; his corse left on the
strand.

His fearefull freends weare out the wofull
night,

Ne dare to weepe, nor seeme to understand
The heavie hap which on them is alight;
Affraid least to themselves the like mishappen
might. 180

21

Now when broad day the world discovered
has,

Up Una rose, up rose the lyon eke;
And on their former journey forward pas,
In waies unknowne, her wandring knight to
seeke,

With paines far passing that long wandring
Greeke,⁶ 185

That for his love refused deitie.
Such were the labours of this Lady meeke,

¹ symbolizing superstition.

² typifying blind devotion. ³ beat.

⁴ "They were afraid of letting him in because of the
Lion." The Lion represents Strength of Mind.

⁵ overcome. ⁶ Odysseus.

Still seeking him, that from her still did flye;
Then furthest from her hope, when most she
weened nye.

22

Soone as she parted thence, the fearfull
twayne, 190
That blind old woman, and her daughter
dear,

Came forth; and, finding Kirkrapine there
slayne,

For anguish great they gan to rend their
heare,

And beat their brests, and naked flesh to
teare:

And when they both had wept and wayld
their fill, 195

Then forth they ran, like two amazed deare,
Halfe mad through malice and revenging will,
To follow her that was the causer of their ill.

23

Whome overtaking, they gan loudly bray,
With hollow houlng, and lamenting cry; 200
Shamefully at her rayling all the way,
And her accusing of dishonesty,

That was the flowre of faith and chastity:
And still, amidst her rayling, she did pray

That plagues, and mischiefes, and long
misery, 205

Might fall on her, and follow all the way,
And that in endlesse error she might ever
stray.

24

But, when she saw her prayers nought pre-
vaile,

Shee backe retourned with some labour lost;
And in the way, as shee did weepe and
waile, 210

A knight her mett in mighty armes embost,¹
Yet knight was not for all his bragging bost,

But subtile Archimag, that Una sought
By traynes ² into new troubles to have taste;

Of that old woman tidings he besought, 215
If that of such a Lady shee could tellen ought.

25

Therewith she gan her passion to renew,
And cry, and curse, and raile, and rend her
heare.

Saying, that harlott shee too lately knew,
That causd her shed so many a bitter
teare; 220

And so forth told the story of her feare.
Much seemed he to mone her haplesse
chaunce,

¹ encased.

² treacheries.

And after for that Lady did inquire;
Which being taught, he forward gan ad-
vaunce
His fair enchanted steed, and eke his
charmed lance. 225

26

Ere long he came where Una traveild slow,
And that wilde champion wayting her be-
syde;
Whome seeing such, for dread hee durst not
show
Him selfe too nigh at hand, but turned wyde
Unto an hil; from whence when she him
spyde, 230
By his like seeming shield her knight by
name
She weend it was, and towards him gan
ride:
Approaching nigh she wist it was the same;
And with faire fearefull humblesse towards
him shee came:

27

And weeping said, "Ah, my long lacked
Lord, 235
Where have ye bene thus long out of my
sight?
Much feared I to have been quite abhord,
Or ought¹ have done, that ye displeasen
might,
That should as death unto my deare² heart
light:
For since mine eie your joyous sight did
mis, 240
My chearefull day is turnd to chearelesse
night,
And eke my night of death the shadow is;
But welcome now, my light, and shining
lampe of blis!"

28

He thereto meeting said, "My dearest
Dame,
Far be it from your thought, and fro my
wil, 245
To thinke that knighthood I so much should
shame,
As you to leave that have me loved stil,
And chose in Faery court, of meere goodwil,
Where noblest knights were to be found on
earth.
The earth shall sooner leave her kindly
skil 250
To bring forth fruit, and make eternal derth,
Then I leave you, my lief³, yborn of heavenly
berth.

1 aught.

2 downcast.

3 beloved.

29

"And sooth to say, why I lefte you so
long,
Was for to seeke adventure in straunge place;
Where, Archimago said, a felon strong 255
To many knights did daily worke disgrace;
But knight he now shall never more deface:
Good cause of mine excuse,¹ that mote² ye
please
Well to accept, and evermore embrace
My faithfull service, that by land and seas
Have vovd you to defend. Now then, your
plaint appease." 261

30

His lovely words her seemd due recom-
pence
Of all her passed paines: one loving howre
For many yeares of sorrow can dispenge;
A dram of sweete is worth a pound of
sowre. 265
Shee has forgott how many a woeful stowre³
For him she late endurd; she speakes no
more
Of past: true is, that true love hath no powre
To looken backe; his eies be fixt before.
Before her stands her knight, for whom she
toyl'd so sore. 270

31

Much like, as when the beaten marinere,
That long hath wandred in the Ocean wide,
Ofte soust in swelling Tethys saltish teare;
And long time having tand his tawney hide
With blustering breath of Heaven, that none
can bide, 275
And scorching flames of fierce Orions hound;⁴
Soone as the port from far he has espide,
His chearfull whistle merily doth sound,
And Nereus crownes with cups;⁵ his mates
him pledg around.

32

Such joy made Una, when her knight she
found, 280
And eke th' enchaunter joyous seemde no
lesse
Then the glad marchant, that does vew from
ground
His ship far come from watrie wilderness;
He hurles out voves, and Neptune oft doth
blesse.
So forth they past; and all the way they
spent 285
Discourising of her dreadful late distresse,

1 "good reason for excusing me."

2 may. 3 danger.

4 Sirius, the dog-star; Orion was a mighty hunter.

5 "drinks to Nereus, the sea-god."

In which he askt her, what the Lyon ment;
Who told her all that fell,¹ in journey as she
went.

33

They had not ridden far, when they might
see
One pricking towards them with hastie
heat,²⁹⁰
Full strongly armd, and on a courser free
That through his fiersnesse fomed all with
sweat,

And the sharpe yron did for anger eat,
When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed² side:
His looke was sterne, and seemed still to
threat²⁹⁵
Cruell revenge, which he in hart did hyde;
And on his shield *Sansloy* in bloody lines was
dyde.

34

When nigh he drew unto this gentle payre,
And saw the Red-crosse which the knight did
beare,
He burnt in fire; and gan eftsoones prepare³⁰⁰
Himselfe to batteill with his couched speare.
Loth was that other, and did faint through
feare,

To taste th' untryed dint of deadly steele:
But yet his Lady did so well him cheare,
That hope of new good hap he gan to
feele;³⁰⁵
So bent³ his speare, and spurd his horse with
yron heele.

35

But that proud Paynim forward came so
ferce
And full of wrath, that, with his sharphead
speare,
Through vainly⁴ crossed shield he quite did
perce;
And, had his staggering steed not shronke for
feare,³¹⁰
Through shield and body eke he should him
beare:

Yet, so great was the puissance of his push,
From his saddle quite he did him beare.
He, tomling rudely downe, to ground did
rush,
And from his gored wound a well of bloud
did gush.³¹⁵

36

Dismounting lightly from his loftie steed,
He to him lept, in minde to reave his life,

¹ "She told all that befell her."

² chafed.

³ braced.

⁴ i.e., the cross did not help.

And proudly said: "Lo! there the worthie
meed

Of him that slew Sansfoy with bloody knife.
Henceforth his ghost, freed from repining
strife,

320

In peace may passen over Lethe¹ lake;
When mourning altars, purgd with enimies
life,

The black infernall Furies doen aslake:²
Life from Sansfoy thou tookst, Sansloy shall
from thee take."

37

Therewith in haste his helmet gan un-
lace,³²⁵

Till Una cride, "O! hold that heavie hand,
Deare Sir, what ever that thou be in place:³
Enough is, that thy foe doth vanquisht stand
Now at thy mercy: Mercy not withstand;

For he is one the truest knight alive,³³⁰
Though conquered now he lye on lowly land;
And, whilest him fortune favoured, fayre did
thrive

In lively field; therefore, of life him not
deprive."

38

Her piteous wordes might not abate his
rage,

But, rudely rending up his helmet, would³³⁵
Have slayne him streight; but when he sees
his age,

And hoarie head of Archimago old,
His hasty hand he doth amased hold,
And halfe ashamed wondred at the sight:

For the old man well knew he, though
untold,³⁴⁰

In charmes and magick to have wondrous
might,

Ne ever wont in field, ne in round lists,⁴ to
fight:

39

And said, "Why Archimago, lucklesse syre,
What doe I see? what hard mishap is this,
That hath thee hether brought to taste mine
yre?"³⁴⁵

Or thine the fault, or mine the error is,
In stead of foe to wound my friend amis?"
He answered nought, but in a traunce still
lay,

And on those guilefull dazed eyes of his
The cloude of death did sit. Which doen
away,⁵³⁵⁰

He left him lying so, ne would no lenger stay:

¹ The river of forgetfulness in Hades.

² assuage.

³ rank.

⁴ i.e., in tournaments, in circular arenas.

⁵ done away, i.e., removed.

40

But to the virgin comes; who all this while
 Amased stands, her selfe so mockt to see
 By him, who has the guerdon of his guile,
 For so misfeigning her true knight to bee: 355
 Yet is she now in more perplexitie,
 Left in the hand of that same Paynim bold,
 From whom her booteth not at all to flie:
 Who, by her cleanly garment catching hold,
 Her from her Palfrey pluckt, her visage to
 behold. 360

41

But her fiers servant, full of kingly aw
 And high disdaine, whenas his souveraine
 Dame

So rudely handled by her foe he saw,
 With gaping jawes full greedy at him came,
 And, ramping on his shield, did weene the
 same 365
 Have reft away with his sharp rending
 clawes:

But he¹ was stout, and lust did now in-
 flame

His corage more, that from his griping pawes
 He hath his shield redeemd, and forth his
 swerd he drawes.

42

O! then, too weake and feeble was the
 forse 370
 Of salvage beast his puissance to withstand;
 For he was strong, and of so mightie corse,
 As ever wielded speare in warlike hand,
 And feates of armes did wisely understand.
 Eft soones he perced through his chaufed
 chest 375

With thrilling² point of deadly yron brand,
 And launcht³ his Lordly hart: with death
 opprest

He ror'd aloud, whiles life forsooke his stub-
 borne brest.

43

Who now is left to keepe the forlorne
 maid

From raging spoile of lawlesse victors
 will? 380

Her faithfull gard remov'd, her hope dismayd,
 Her selfe a yielded pray to save or spill:⁴
 He now, Lord of the field, his pride to fill,
 With foule reproches and disdainful spight
 Her vildly⁵ entertaines; and, will or nill, 385
 Beares her away upon his courser light:
 Her prayers nought prevaile, his rage is more
 of might.

¹ Sansloy.
³ pierced.

² piercing.
⁴ destroy.

⁵ vilely.

44

And all the way, with great lamenting
 paine,

And piteous plaintes, she filleth his dull eares,
 That stony hart could riven have in
 twaine; 390

And all the way she wetts with flowing
 teares;

But he, enrag'd with rancor, nothing heares.
 Her servile beast yet would not leave her so,
 But followes her far off, ne ought he feares
 To be partaker of her wandring woe; 395
 More mild in beastly kind then that her
 beastly foe.

CANTO IV

To sinfull hous of Pryde Duessa
 Guydes the faithfull knight;
 Where, brothers death to wreak, Sansjoy
 Doth chaleng him to fight.

I

Young knight whatever, that dost armes
 professe,

And through long labours hunttest after fame,
 Beware of fraud, beware of ficklenesse,
 In choice, and chaunge of thy deare-loved
 Dame;

Least thou of her believe too lightly blame, 5
 And rash misweening doe thy hart remove:
 For unto knight there is no greater shame
 Than lightnesse and inconstancie in love:
 That doth this Redcrosse knights ensample
 plainly prove.

2

Who, after that he had faire Una lorne,¹ 10
 Through light misdeeming of her loialtie;
 And false Duessa in her sted had borne,
 Called Fidess', and so supposd to be,
 Long with her traveild; till at last they see
 A goodly building bravely garnished; 15
 The house of mightie Prince it seemd to be,
 And towards it a broad high way that led,
 All bare through peoples feet which thether
 traveiled.

3

Great troupes of people traveild thether-
 ward

Both day and night, of each degree and
 place; 20

But few returned, having scaped hard,
 With balefull beggery, or foule disgrace;
 Which ever after in most wretched case,
 Like loathsome lazars, by the hedges lay.
 Thether Duessa badd him bend his pace, 25

¹ lost; here, forsaken.

For she is wearie of the toilsom way,
And also nigh consumed is the lingering day.

4

A stately Pallace built of squared bricke,
Which cunningly was without morter laid,
Whose wals were high, but nothing strong
nor thick, 30
And golden foile all over them displaid,
That purest skye with brightnesse they dis-
maid:

High lifted up were many loftie towres,
And goodly galleries far over laid,
Full of faire windowes and delightful
bowres: 35
And on the top a Diall told the timely howres.

5

It was a goodly heape for to behould,
And spake the praises of the workmans witt;
But full great pittie, that so faire a mould
Did on so weake foundation ever sitt: 40
For on a sandie hill, that still did flitt¹
And fall away, it mounted was full hie,
That every breath of heaven shook itt:
And all the hinder partes, that few could spie,
Were ruinous and old, but painted cun-
ningly. 45

6

Arrived there, they passed in forth right;
For still to all the gates stood open wide:
Yet charge of them was to a Porter hight,²
Cald Malvenú, who entrance none denide:
Thence to the hall, which was on every
side 50
With rich array and costly arras dight.
Infinite sortes of people did abide
There waiting long, to win the wished sight
Of her, that was the Lady of that Pallace
bright.

7

By them they passe, all gazing on them
round, 55
And to the Presence mount; whose glorious
vew
Their frayle amazed senses did confound:
In living Princes court none ever knew
Such endlesse riches, and so sumptuous
shew;
Ne Persia selfe, the nourse³ of pompous
pride, 60
Like ever saw. And there a noble crew
Of Lords and Ladies stood on every side,
Which with their presence fayre the place
much beautifide.

1 shift.

2 here, given.

3 nurse.

8

High above all a cloth of State was spred,
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day; 65
On which there sate, most brave embellished
With royall robes and gorgeous array,
A mayden Queene that shone as Titans ray,
In glistring gold and perelesse pretious stone;
Yet her bright blazing beautie did assay 70
To dim the brightnesse of her glorious throne,
As envying her selfe, that too exceeding
shone:

9

Exceeding shone, like Phœbus fayrest
childe,¹
That did presume his fathers fyrie wayne,
And flaming mouthes of steedes, unwonted
wilde, 75
Through highest heaven with weaker hand to
rayne,
Proud of such glory and advancement vayne,
While flashing beames do daze his feeble
eyen,
He leaves the welkin way most beaten
playne,²
And, rapt with whirling wheelles, inflames the
skyen 80
With fire not made to burne, but fayrely for
to shyne.

10

So proud she shyned in her princely state,
Looking to heaven, for earth she did dis-
dayne,
And sitting high, for lowly she did hate:
Lo! underneath her scornefull feete was
layne 85
A dreadfull Dragon with an hideous trayne;
And in her hand she held a mirrhour bright,
Wherein her face she often vewed fayne,³
And in her selfe-lov'd semblance took de-
light;
For she was wondrous faire, as any living
wight. 90

11

Of griesly Pluto she the daughter was,
And sad Proserpina, the Queene of hell;
Yet did she thinke her pearelesse worth to pas
That parentage, with pride so did she swell;
And thundering Jove, that high in heaven
doth dwell 95
And wield the world, she claymed for her
syre,
Or if that any else did Jove excell;

1 Phaethon, who tried to drive his father's sun-horses
across the heavens.

2 i.e., beaten path.

3 gladly.

For to the highest she did still aspyre,
Or, if ought higher were than that, did it
desyre.

12

And proud Lucifera ¹ men did her call, ¹⁰⁰
That made her selfe a Queene, and crownd
to be;
Yet rightfull kingdome she had none at all,
Ne heritage of native sovraintie;
But did usurpe with wrong and tyrannie
Upon the scepter which she now did hold: ¹⁰⁵
Ne ruld her Realme with lawes, but pollicie,
And strong advizement of six wizards ² old,
That, with their counsels bad, her kingdome
did uphold.

13

Soone as the Elfin knight in presence came,
And false Duessa, seeming Lady fayre, ¹¹⁰
A gentle Husher, Vanitie by name,
Made rowme, and passage for them did pre-
paire:
So goodly brought them to the lowest stayre
Of her high throne; where they, on humble
knee
Making obeysaunce, did the cause de-
clare, ¹¹⁵
Why they were come her roiall state to see,
To prove the wide report of her great
Majestee.

14

With loftie eyes, halfe loth to looke so
lowe,
She thancked them in her disdainfull wise;
Ne other grace vouchsafed them to shewe ¹²⁰
Of Princesse worthy; scarce them bad arise.
Her Lordes and Ladies all this while de-
vise
Themselves to setten forth to straungers
sight:
Some frounce ³ their curled heare in courtly
guise;
Some prancke ⁴ their ruffes; and others
trimly dight ¹²⁵
Their gay attyre; each others greater pride
does spight.

15

Goodly they all that knight doe enter-
tayne,
Right glad with him to have increast their
crew;
But to Duess' each one himselfe did payne
All kindnesse and faire courtesie to shew, ¹³⁰

¹ symbolizing pride.³ frizzle.² wizards, wise men.⁴ dress up.

For in that court whylome ¹ her well they
knew:
Yet the stout Faery mongst the middest
crowd
Thought all their glorie vaine in knightly
vew,
And that great Princesse too exceeding
prowd,
That to strange knight no better countenance
allowd. ¹³⁵

16

Suddein upriseth from her stately place
The roiall Dame, and for her coche doth
call:
All hurtlen ² forth; and she, with princely
pace,
As faire Aurora in her purple pall
Out of the East the dawning day doth
call. ¹⁴⁰
So forth she comes; her brightnes brode doth
blaze.
The heapes of people, thronging in the hall,
Doe ride each other upon her to gaze:
Her glorious glitterand light doth all mens
eies amaze.

17

So forth she comes, and to her coche does
clyme, ¹⁴⁵
Adorned all with gold and girlonds gay,
That seemd as fresh as Flora in her prime;
And strove to match, in roiall rich array,
Great Junoes golden chayre; the which, they
say,
The gods stand gazing on, when she does
ride ¹⁵⁰
To Joves high hous through heavens bras-
paved way,
Drawne of fayre Pecoeks, that excell in pride,
And full of Argus ³ eyes their tayles dis-
predden wide.

18

But this was drawne of six unequall beasts,
On which her six sage Counsellours did
ryde, ¹⁵⁵
Taught to obay their bestiall beheasts,
With like conditions to their kindes applyde;
Of which the first, that all the rest did guyde,
Was sluggish Idlenesse, the nourse of sin;
Upon a slouthfull Asse he chose to ryde, ¹⁶⁰
Arayd in habit blacke, and amis ⁴ thin,
Like to an holy Monck, the service to be-
gin.

¹ formerly.² hurry.³ After Argus's death Hera put his many eyes into the peacock's tail.⁴ amice, a priest's white neck-piece.

19

And in his hand his Portesse ¹ still he bare,
That much was worne, but therein little redd;
For of devotion he had little care, ¹⁶⁵
Still drown'd in sleepe, and most of his daies
dedit:
Scarse could he once uphold his heavie hedd,
To looken whether it were night or day.
May seeme the wayne ² was very evill ledd,
When such an one had guiding of the way, ¹⁷⁰
That knew not whether right he went, or
else astray.

20

From worldly cares himselfe he did
esloyne,³
And greatly shunned manly exercise;
From everie worke he chalenged essoyne,⁴
For contemplation sake: yet otherwise ¹⁷⁵
His life he led in lawlesse riotise,
By which he grew to grievous malady;
For in his lustlesse limbs, through evill guise,
A shaking fever raignd continually.
Such one was Idlenesse, first of this com-
pany. ¹⁸⁰

21

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,
Deformed creature, on a filthie swyne.
His belly was upblowne with luxury,
And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne;
And like a Crane his necke was long and
fyne ¹⁸⁵
With which he swallowed up excessive feast,
For want whereof poore people oft did pyne:
And all the way, most like a brutish beast,
He spued up his gorge, that all did him
detest.

22

In greene vine leaves he was right fitly
clad, ¹⁹⁰
For other clothes he could not weare for heate;
And on his head an yvie girland had,
From under which fast trickled downe the
sweat.
Still as he rode he somewhat still did eat,
And in his hand did beare a bouzing ⁵ can, ¹⁹⁵
Of which he supt so oft, that on his seat
His dronken corse he scarce upholden can:
In shape and life more like a monster then a
man.

23

Unfit he was for any worldly thing,
And eke unhable once to stirre or go; ²⁰⁰

¹ prayer book.
⁴ excuse.

² wain, chariot.
⁵ boozing, drinking.

³ withdraw.

Not meet to be of counsell to a king,
Whose mind in meat and drinke was drowned
so,
That from his frend he seeldome knew his fo.
Full of diseases was his carcas blew,
And a dry dropsie through his flesh did
flow, ²⁰⁵
Which by misdiet daily greater grew.
Such one was Gluttony, the second of that
crew.

24

And next to him rode lustfull Lechery,
Upon a bearded Goat, whose rugged haire,
And whally ¹ eyes (the signe of gelosy,) ²¹⁰
Was like the person selfe, whom he did beare:
Who rough, and blacke, and filthy did ap-
peare,
Unseemely man to please faire Ladies eye;
Yet he of Ladies oft was loved deare,
When fairer faces were bid standen by: ²¹⁵
O who does know the bent of womens
fantasy?

25

In a greene gowne he clothed was full faire,
Which underneath did hide his filthinesse,
And in his hand a burning hart he bare,
Full of vaine follies, and new fanglenesse: ²²⁰
For he was false, and fraught with fickle-
nesse,
And learned had to love with secret looks,
And well could daunce, and sing with rueful-
nesse,
And fortunes tell, and read in loving bookes,
And thousand other wayes, to bait his fleshly
hookes. ²²⁵

26

Inconstant man, that loved all he saw,
And lusted after all, that he did love,
Ne would his looser life be tide to law,
But joyd weake wemens hearts to tempt and
prove
If from their loyall loves he might then
move; ²³⁰
Which lewdnesse fild him with reprochfull
paine
Of that fowle evill, which all men reprove,
That rots the marrow, and consumes the
braine;
Such one was Lecherie, the third of all this
traine.

27

And greedy Avarice by him did ride, ²³⁵
Upon a Camell loaden all with gold;

¹ greenish.

Two iron coffers hong on either side,
 With precious metall full as they might hold;
 And in his lap an heap of coine he told;¹
 For of his wicked pelfe his God he made, 240
 And unto hell him selfe for money sold:
 Accursed usury was all his trade,
 And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce
 waide.

28

His life was nigh unto deaths dore yplaste;
 And thred-bare cote, and cobled shoes, hee
 ware; 245
 Ne scarce good morsell all his life did taste,
 But both from backe and belly still did spare,
 To fill his bags, and richesse to compare:²
 Yet childe ne kinsman living had he none
 To leave them to; but thorough daily care 250
 To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne,
 He led a wretched life, unto himselfe un-
 knowne.

29

Most wretched wight, whom nothing
 might suffice;
 Whose greedy lust did lacke in greatest store;
 Whose need had end, but no end covetise;³
 Whose welth was want, whose plenty made
 him pore; 256
 Who had enough, yett wished ever more;
 A vile disease: and eke in foote and hand
 A grievous gout tormented him full sore,
 That well he could not touch, nor goe, nor
 stand. 260
 Such one was Avarice, the fourth of this faire
 band.

30

And next to him malicious Envy rode
 Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw
 Between his cankered teeth a venomous tode,
 That all the poison ran about his chaw;⁴ 265
 But inwardly he chawed his owne maw⁵
 At neighbours welth, that made him ever sad,
 For death it was, when any good he saw;
 And wept, that cause of weeping none he had;
 But when he heard of harme he waxed⁶ 270
 wondrous glad.

31

All in a kirtle of discoloured say⁷
 He clothed was, ypaynted full of eies;
 And in his bosome secretly there lay
 An hatefull Snake, the which his taile uptyes
 In many folds, and mortall sting implyes.⁸ 275

1 counted.
 5 stomach.
 8 wraps up.

2 acquire.
 6 waxed, grew.

3 avarice.
 7 fine serge.

4 jaw.

Still as he rode he gnasht his teeth to see
 Those heapes of gold with griple¹ Covetise;
 And grudged at the great felicitie
 Of proud Lucifera, and his owne companee.

32

He hated all good workes and vertuous
 deeds, 280
 And him no lesse, that any like did use;
 And who with gracious bread the hungry
 feeds,
 His almes for want of faith he doth accuse.
 So every good to bad he doth abuse;
 And eke the verse of famous Poets witt 285
 He does backebite, and spightfull poison
 spues
 From leprous mouth on all that ever writt.
 Such one vile Envy was, that fite in row did
 sitt.

33

And him beside rides fierce revenging
 Wrath,²
 Upon a Lion, loth for to be led; 290
 And in his hand a burning brond he hath,
 The which he brandisheth about his hed;
 His eies did hurle forth sparckles fiery red,
 And stared sterne on all that him beheld;
 As ashes pale of hew, and seeming ded; 295
 And on his dagger still his hand he held,
 Trembling through hasty rage when choler
 in him sweld.

34

His ruffin³ raiment all was stained with
 blood
 Which he had spilt, and all to rags yrent,
 Through unadvised rashnes woxen⁴ wood;⁵
 For of his hands he had no government, 301
 Ne car'd for blood in his avengement:
 But, when the furious fitt was overpast,
 His cruel facts⁶ he often would repent;
 Yet, wilfull man, he never would forecast 305
 How many mischieves should ensue his
 heedlesse hast.

35

Full many mischiefes follow cruell Wrath:
 Abhorred bloodshed, and tumultuous strife,
 Unmanly murder, and unthrifty scath;⁷
 Bitter despight, with rancours rusty
 knife, 310
 And fretting griefe, the enemy of life:
 All these, and many evils moe haunt ire,

1 grasping, greedy.
 2 The six counsellors and Lucifera or Pride are, of
 course, the seven deadly sins.
 3 ruffian.
 4 grown.
 5 mad.
 6 acts.
 7 harm.

The swelling Splene, and Frenzy raging rife,
The shaking Palsey, and Saint Fraunces fire.¹
Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly
tire.² 315

36

And, after all, upon the wagon beame,
Rode Sathan with a smarting whip in hand,
With which he forward lasht the laesy teme,
So oft as Slowth still in the mire did stand.
Huge routs of people did about them
band, 320
Showing for joy; and still before their way
A foggy mist had covered all the land;
And, underneath their feet, all scattered lay
Dead skulls and bones of men whose life had
gone astray.

37

So forth they marchen in this goodly
sort, 325
To take the solace of the open aire,
And in fresh flowring fields themselves to
sport:

Emongst the rest rode that false Lady faire,
The foule Duessa, next unto the chaire
Of proud Lucifer, as one of the traine: 330
But that good knight would not so nigh
repaire,
Him selfe estraunging from their joyaunce
vaine,
Whose fellowship seemd far unfitt for warlike
swaine.

38

So, having solaced themselves a space
With pleasaunce of the breathing fields
yfed, 335
They backe retourned to the princely Place;
Whereas an errant knight in armes yclod,
And heathn shield, wherein with letters
red,

Was writt *Sansjoy*, they new arrived find:
Enflam'd with fury and fiers hardy hed, 340
He seemd in hart to harbour thoughts un-
kind,
And nourish bloody vengeance in his bitter
mind.

39

Who, when the shamed shield of slaine
Sansfoy
He spide with that same Faery champions
page,
Bewraying him that did of late destroy 345

His eldest brother; burning all with rage,
He to him lept, and that same envious gage¹
Of victors glory from him snacht away:
But th' Elfin knight, which ought² that war-
like wage,

Disdained to loose the meed he wonne in
fray; 350
And, him rencountring fierce, reskewd the
noble pray.

40

Therewith they gan to hurtlen greedily,
Redoubted battaile ready to darrayne,³
And clash their shields, and shake their
swords on hy,
That with their sturre they troubled all the
train; 355
Till that great Queene, upon eternall paine
Of high displeasure that ensewen might,
Commaunded them their fury to refraine;
And, if that either to that shield had right,
In equall lists they should the morrow next
it fight. 360

41

"Ah, dearest Dame," quoth then the
Paynim bold,
"Pardon the error of enraged wight,
Whome great griefe made forgett the raines
to hold
Of reasons rule, to see this recreaunt knight,
No knight, but treachour full of false dis-
spight 365
And shameful treason, who through guile
hath slayn
The prowtest knight that ever field did
fight,
Even stout Sansfoy, (O who can then re-
frayn?)
Whose shield he beares renverst,⁴ the more
to heap disdayn.

42

"And, to augment the glorie of his guile, 370
His dearest love, the faire Fidessa, loe!
Is there possessed of the traytour vile;
Who reapes the harvest sown by his foe,
Sowen in bloodie field, and bought with
woe!
That brothers hand shall dearly well re-
quight, 375
So be, O Queene! you equall favour showe."
Him litle answerd th' angry Elfin knight;
He never meant with words, but swords, to
plead his right:

¹ Saint Anthony's fire, or erysipelas, which Saint Anthony was supposed to cure.
² band.

¹ wage, challenge. ² owned.
³ to arrange (especially of troops for battle).
⁴ reversed.

43

But threw his gauntlet, as a sacred pledge
 His cause in combat the next day to try: ³⁸⁰
 So been they parted both, with harts on edge
 To be aveng'd each on his enemy.
 That night they pas in joy and jollity,
 Feasting and courting both in bowre and
 hall;
 For Steward was excessive Gluttony, ³⁸⁵
 That of his plenty poured forth to all:
 Which doen, the Chamberlain, Slowth, did
 to rest them call.

44

Now whenas darkesome night had all dis-
 played
 Her coleblacke curtein over brightest skye;
 The warlike youthes, on dayntie couches
 layd, ³⁹⁰
 Did chace away sweet sleepe from sluggish
 eye,
 To muse on meanes of hoped victory.
 But whenas Morpheus had with leaden mace
 Arrested all that courtly company,
 Uprose Duessa from her resting place, ³⁹⁵
 And to the Paynims lodging comes with
 silent pace.

45

Whom broad awake she findes, in troublous
 fitt,
 Fore-casting how his foe he might annoy;
 And him amoves with speaches seeming
 fitt:
 "Ah deare Sansjoy, next dearest to Sans-
 foy, ⁴⁰⁰
 Cause of my new griefe, cause of my new joy;
 Joyous to see his ymage in mine eye,
 And greevd to thinke how foe did him de-
 stroy,
 That was the flowre of grace and chev-
 alrye;
 Lo! his Fidessa, to thy secret faith I flye."

46

With gentle wordes he can her fayrely
 greet, ⁴⁰⁶
 And bad say on the secrete of her hart:
 Then, sighing soft; "I learne that litle sweet
 Oft tempred is," (quoth she,) "with muchell
 smart:
 For since my brest was launcht with lovely
 dart ⁴¹⁰
 Of deare Sansfoy, I never joyed howre,
 But in eternall woes my weaker hart
 Have wasted, loving him with all my powre,
 And for his sake have felt full many an
 heavie stowre.

47

"At last, when perils all I weened past, ⁴¹⁵
 And hop'd to reape the crop of all my care,
 Into new woes unweeting I was cast
 By this false faytor,¹ who unworthie ware
 His worthie shield, whom he with guilefull
 snare
 Entrapped slew, and brought to shamefull
 grave: ⁴²⁰
 Me, silly maid, away with him he bare,
 And ever since hath kept in darksom cave,
 For that I would not yeeld that to Sansfoy I
 gave.

48

"But since faire Sunne hath sperst that
 lowring clowd,
 And to my loathed life now shewes some
 light, ⁴²⁵
 Under your beames I will me safely shrowd
 From dreaded storme of his disdainfull
 spight:
 To you th' inheritance belongs by right
 Of brothers prayse, to you eke longes his
 love.
 Let not his love, let not his restlesse
 spright, ⁴³⁰
 Be unreveng'd, that calles to you above
 From wandring Stygian shores, where it doth
 endlesse move."

49

Thereto said he, "Faire Dame, be nought
 dismaid
 For sorrowes past; their griefe is with them
 gone:
 Ne yet of present perill be affraid, ⁴³⁵
 For needlesse feare did never vantage none;
 And hellesse hap it booteth not to mone.
 Dead is Sansfoy, his vitall paines are past,
 Though greeved ghost for vengeance deep do
 grone: ⁴³⁹
 He lives that shall him pay his dewties last,
 And guiltie Elfin blood shall sacrifice in hast."

50

"O! but I feare the fickle freakes," (quoth
 shee)
 "Of fortune false, and oddes of armes in field."
 "Why, dame," (quoth he) "what oddes can
 ever bee,
 Where both doe fight alike, to win or
 yield?" ⁴⁴⁵
 "Yea, but," (quoth she) "he beares a charmed
 shield,
 And eke enchanted armes, that none can
 perce;
 i impostor.

Ne none can wound the man that does them
wield."

"Charmd or enchanted," answerd he then
ferce,

"I no whitt reck, ne you the like need to
reherce. 450

51

"But faire Fidessa, sithens¹ fortunes
guile,

Or enimies powre, hath now captived you,
Returne from whence ye came, and rest a
while,

Till morrow next that I the Elfe subdew,
And with Sansfoyes dead dowry **you en-**
dew." 455

"Ah me! that is a double death," (she said)
"With proud foes sight my sorrow to re-
new,

Where ever yet I be, my secret aide
Shall follow you." So, passing forth, she
him obaid.

CANTO V

The faithfull knight in equall field
Subdewes his faithlesse foe;
Whom false Duessa saves, and for
His cure to hell does goe.

1

The noble hart that harbours vertuous
thought,
And is with childe of glorious great intent,
Can never rest, untill it forth have brought
Th' eternall brood of glorie excellent:
Such restlesse passion did all night torment 5
The flaming corage of that Faery knight,
Devizing how that doughtie turnament
With greatest honour he atchieven might:
Still did he wake, and still did watch for
dawning light.

2

At last, the golden Orientall gate 10
Of greatest heaven gan to open fayre;
And Phoebus, fresh as brydegrome to his
mate,
Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie
hayre,
And hurl'd his glistring beams through
gloomy ayre.
Which when the wakeful Elfe perceiv'd,
streight way, 15
He started up, and did him selfe prepayre
In sunbright armes, and battailous array;
For with that Pagan proud he combatt will
that day.

1 ince.

3

And forth he comes into the commune
hall;

Where earely waite him many a gazing
eye, 20

To weet what end to straunger knights may
fall.

There many Minstrales maken melody,
To drive away the dull melancholy;
And many Bardes, that to the trembling
chord

Can tune their timely voices cunningly; 25
And many Chroniclers, that can record
Old loves, and warres for Ladies doen by
many a Lord.

4

Soone after comes the cruell Sarazin,
In woven maile all armed warily;
And sternly looks at him, who not a pin 30
Does care for looke of living creatures eye.
They bring them wines of Greece and Araby,
And daintie spices fetch from furthest Ynd,¹
To kindle heat of corage privily;
And in the wine a solemne oth they bynd 35
T' observe the sacred lawes of armes that are
assynd.

5

At last forth comes that far renowned
Queene:
With royall pomp and princely majestie
She is ybrought unto a paled² greene,
And placed under stately canapee, 40
The warlike feates of both those knights to
see.
On th' other side in all mens open vew
Duessa placed is, and on a tree
Sansfoy his shield is hangd with bloody
hew;
Both those the lawrell girlonds to the victor
dew. 45

6

A shrilling trompett sownded from on
hye,
And unto battaill bad them selves addresse:
Their shining shieldes about their wrestes
they tye,
And burning blades about their heades doe
blesse,³
The instruments of wrath and heavinesse. 50
With greedy force each other doth assayle,
And strike so fiercely, that they do impresse
Deepe dinted furrowes in the battred mayle:
The yron walles to ward their blowes are
weak and fraile.

1 India.

2 enclosed by palings.

3 swing.

7

The Sarazin was stout and wondrous
strong, 55
And heaped blowes like yron hammers great;
For after blood and vengeance he did long:
The knight was fiers, and full of youthly heat,
And doubled strokes, like dreaded thunders
threat;
For all for praise and honour he did fight. 60
Both stricken stryke, and beaten both doe
beat,
That from their shields forth flyeth fire light,
And hewen helmets deepe shew marks of
eithers might.

8

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for
right,
As when a Gryfon, seized of his pray, 65
A Dragon fiers encountreth in his flight,
Through widest ayre making his ydle way,
That would his rightfull ravine¹ rend away:
With hideous horror both together smight,
And souce² so sore that they the heavens
affray; 70
The wise Southsayer, seeing so sad sight,
Th' amazed vulgar telles of warres and
mortall fight.

9

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for
right,
And each to deadly shame would drive his
foe:
The cruell steele so greedily doth bight 75
In tender flesh, that streames of blood down
flow;
With which the armes, that earst³ so bright
did show,
Into a pure vermillion now are dyde.
Great ruth in all the gazers harts did grow,
Seeing the gored woundes to gape so wyde, 80
That victory they dare not wish to either
side.

10

At last the Paynim chaunst to cast his
eye,
His sudden eye flaming with wrathfull fyre,
Upon his brothers shield, which hong thereby:
Therewith redoubled was his raging yre, 85
And said; "Ah! wretched sonne of wofull
syre,
Doeest thou sit wayling by blacke Stygian
lake,
Whylest here thy shield is hangd for victors
hyre?"

1 prey.

2 attack suddenly.

3 formerly.

And, sluggish german,¹ doest thy forces slake
To after-send his foe, that him may over-
take? 90

11

"Goe, caytive Elfe, him quickly overtake,
And soone redeeme from his long-wandering
woe:
Goe, guiltie ghost, to him my message make,
That I his shield have quit² from dying foe."
Therewith upon his crest he stroke him so, 95
That twice he reeled, readie twice to fall:
End of the doubtfull battaile deemed tho
The lookers on; and lowd to him gan call
The false Duessa, 'Thine the shield, and I,
and all!"

12

Soone as the Faerie heard his Ladie
speake, 100
Out of his swowning dreame he gan awake;
And quickning faith, that earst was woxen
weake,
The creeping deadly cold away did shake:
Tho mov'd with wrath, and shame, and
Ladies sake,
Of all attonce he cast³ avengd to be, 105
And with so exceeding furie at him strake,
That forced him to stoupe upon his knee:
Had he not stouped so, he should have cloven
bee.

13

And to him said; "Goe now, proud Mis-
creant,
Thyselfe thy message do to german deare; 110
Alone he, wandering, thee too long doth want:
Goe say, his foe thy shield with his doth
beare."
Therewith his heavie hand he high gan reare,
Him to have slaine; when lo! a darkesome
clowd
Upon him fell: he no where doth appeare, 115
But vanisht is. The Elfe him calls alowd,
But answer none receives; the darknes him
does shrowd.

14

In haste Duessa from her place arose,
And to him running said; "O! prowrest
knight,
That ever Ladie to her love did chose, 120
Let now abate the terrour of your might,
And quench the flame of furious despight,
And bloodie vengeance: lo! th' infernall
powres,

1 relative; here, brother.
3 planned how.

2 retrieved.

Covering your foe with cloud of deadly night,
Have borne him hence to Plutoes balefull
bowres: 125
The conquest yours; I yours; the shield, and
glory yours."

15

Not all so satisfide, with greedy eye
He sought all round about, his thirstie¹ blade
To bathe in blood of faithlesse enemy;
Who all that while lay hid in secret shade. 130
He standes amazed how he thence should
fade:
At last the trumpets Triumph sound on hie;
And running Heralds humble homage made,
Greeting him goodly with new victorie,
And to him brought the shield, the cause of
enmitie. 135

16

Wherewith he goeth to that souveraine
Queene;
And falling her before on lowly knee,
To her makes present of his service seene:
Which she accepts with thankes and goodly
gree,²
Greatly advauncing³ his gay chevalree: 140
So marcheth home, and by her takes the
knight,
Whom all the people followe with great glee,
Shouting, and clapping all their hands on
hight,
That all the ayre it fills, and flyes to heaven
bright.

17

Home is he brought, and layd in sumptuous
bed, 145
Where many skilfull leaches him abide
To salve his hurts, that yet still freshly bled.
In wine and oyle they wash his woundes wide,
And softly gan embalme on everie side:
And all the while most heavenly melody 150
About the bed sweet musicke did divide,⁴
Him to beguile of griefe and agony;
And all the while Duessa wept full bitterly.

18

As when a wearie traveler, that strays
By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed
Nile, 155
Unweeting of the perillous wandring wayes,
Doth meete a cruell craftie Crocodile,
Which, in false griefe hyding his harmefull
guile,
Doth weepe full sore, and sheddeth tender
teares;

1 thirstie. 2 pleasure. 3 praising. 4 play.

The foolish man, that pities all this while 160
His mournefull plight, is swallowed up un-
wares,
Forgetfull of his owne that mindes an others
cares.

19

So wept Duessa untill eventyde,
That shyning lampes in Joves high house
were light;
Then forth she rose, ne lenger would
abide, 165
But comes unto the place where th' Hethen
knight,
In slombring swownd, nigh voyd of vitall
spright,
Lay cover'd with inchaunted cloud all day:
Whom when she found, as she him left in
plight,
To wayle his wofull case she would not
stay, 170
But to the Easterne coast of heaven makes
speedy way:

20

Where griesly Night, with visage deadly
sad,
That Phœbus chearefull face durst never vew,
And in a foule blacke pitchy mantle clad,
She findes forth comming from her darksome
mew,¹ 175
Where she all day did hide her hated hew.
Before the dore her yron charet stood,
Already harnessd for journey new,
And cole blacke steedes yborne of hellish
brood,
That on their rusty bits did champ as they
were wood. 180

21

Who when she saw Duessa, sunny bright,
Adorn'd with gold and jewels shining cleare,
She greatly grew amazed at the sight,
And th' unacquainted light began to feare,
For never did such brightnes there ap-
peare; 185
And would have backe rettyred to her cave,
Untill the witches speach she gan to heare,
Saying; "Yet, O thou dreaded Dame! I crave
Abyde, till I have told the message which I
have."

22

She stayd; and forth Duessa gan pro-
ceede: 190
"O! thou most auncient Grandmother² of
all.

1 hiding-place. 2 Night.

More old then Jove, whom thou at first didst
breede,
Or that great house of Gods cælestiall,
Which wast begot in Dæmogorgons hall,¹
And sawst the secrets of the world un-
made. 195
Why suffredst thou thy Nephewes deare to
fall,
With Elfin sword most shamefully betrade?
Lo! where the stout Sansjoy doth sleepe in
deadly shade.

23

"And him before, I saw with bitter eyes
The bold Sansfoy shrinck underneath his
speare: 200
And now the pray of fowles in field he lyes,
Nor wayld of friends, nor layd on groning
beare,
That whylome was to me too dearely deare.
O! what of gods then boots it to be borne,
If old Aveugles² sonnes so evill heare? 205
Or who shall not great Nightes children
scorne,
When two of three her Nephewes are so
fowle forlorne?

24

"Up, then! up, dreary Dame, of darknes
Queene!
Go, gather up the reliques of thy race;
Or else goe them avenge, and let be seene 210
That dreaded Night in brightest day hath
place,
And can the children of fayre light deface."
Her feeling speaches some compassion mov'd
In hart, and chaunge in that great mothers
face:
Yet pitty in her hart was never prov'd 215
Till then, for evermore she hated, never lov'd:

25

And said, "Deare daughter, rightly may I
rew
The fall of famous children borne of mee,
And good successes which their foes ensew:
But who can turne the stream of destinee, 220
Or breake the chayne of strong necessitee,
Which fast is tyde to Joves eternall seat?
The sonnes of Day he favoureth, I see,
And by my ruines thinkes to make them
great:
To make one great by others losse is bad
excheat.³ 225

¹ i.e., in darkness. Demogorgon was the master demon
in Hades.

² Aveugle (the Blind Man) is the father of the three
paynims.

³ confiscation; here, business.

26

"Yet shall they not escape so freely all,
For some shall pay the price of others guilt;
And he the man that made Sansfoy to fall,
Shall with his owne blood price¹ that he hath
spilt.
But what art thou, that telst of Nephews
kilt?" 230
"I, that do seeme not I, Duessa ame,"
Quoth she, "how ever now, in garments gilt
And gorgeous gold arayd, I to thee came,
Duessa I, the daughter of Deceit and
Shame."

27

Then, bowing downe her aged backe, she
kist 235
The wicked witch, saying, "In that fayre face
The false resemblance of Deceit, I wist,
Did closely lurke; yet so true-seeming grace
It carried, that I scarce in darksome place
Could it discerne, though I the mother
bee 240
Of falshood, and roote of Duessaes race.
O welcome, child! whom I have longd to see,
And now have seene unwares. Lo! now I
goe with thee."

28

Then to her yron wagon she betakes,
And with her beares the fowle welfavourd
witch. 245
Through mirkesome aire her ready way she
makes:
Her twyfold Teme, of which two blacke as
pitch,
And two were browne, yet each to each un-
lich,²
Did softly swim away, ne ever stamp
Unlesse she chaunst their stubborne mouths
to twitch; 250
Then, foming tarre, their bridles they would
champ,
And trampling the fine element would fiercely
ramp.

29

So well they sped, that they be come at
length
Unto the place whereas the Paynim lay,
Devoid of outward sence and native
strength, 255
Coverd with charmed cloud from vew of day,
And sight of men, since his late luckelesse
fray.
His cruell wounds, with cruddy³ bloud con-
geald,

¹ repay.

² unlike.

³ curdy.

They binden up so wisely as they may,
And handle softly, till they can be heald: ²⁶⁰
So lay him in her charett, close in night conceald.

30

And, all the while she stood upon the
ground,
The wakefull dogs did never cease to bay,
As giving warning of th' unwonted sound,
With which her yron wheelles did them
affray, ²⁶⁵
And her darke griesly looke them much dismay:

The messenger of death, the ghastly owle,
With drery shriekes did also her bewray;
And hungry wolves continually did howle
At her abhorred face, so filthy and so
fowle. ²⁷⁰

31

Thence turning backe in silence softe they
stole,
And brought the heavy corse with easy pace
To yawning gulfe of deepe Avernus hole.
By that same hole-an entraunce, darke and
bace,
With smoake and sulphur hiding all the
place, ²⁷⁵
Descends to hell: there creature never past,
That backe returned without heavenly
grace;
But dreadfull Furies, which their chaines
have brast,
And damned sprights sent forth to make ill
men aghast.

32

By that same way the direfull dames doe
drive ²⁸⁰
Their mournefull charett, fild with rusty
blood,
And downe to Plutoes house are come bilive:
Which passing through, on every side them
stood
The trembling ghosts with sad amazed mood,
Chattring their iron teeth, and staring
wide ²⁸⁵
With stony eies; and all the hellish brood
Of feends infernall flockt on every side,
To gaze on erthly wight that with the Night
durst ride.

33

They pas the bitter waves of Acheron,¹
Where many soules sit wailing woefully, ²⁹⁰
And come to fiery flood of Phlegeton,¹

¹ Rivers in Hades.

Whereas the damned ghosts in torments fry,
And with sharp shrilling shriekes doe boot-
lesse cry,
Cursing high Jove, the which them thither
sent.

The house of endlesse paine is built
thereby, ²⁹⁵
In which ten thousand sorts of punishment
The cursed creatures doe eternally torment.

34

Before the threshold dreadfull Cerberus
His three deformed heads did lay along,
Curled with thousand adders venemous, ³⁰⁰
And lilled forth his bloody flaming tong:
At them he gan to reare his bristles strong,
And felly ¹ gnarre,² untill Dayes enemy
Did him appease; then downe his taile he
hong,
And suffered them to passen quietly; ³⁰⁵
For she in hell and heaven had power equally.

35

There was Ixion turned on a wheele,
For daring tempt the Queene of heaven to
sin;
And Sisyphus an huge round stone did reele
Against an hill, ne might from labour
lin; ³¹⁰
There thristy Tantalus hong by the chin;
And Tityus fed a vultur on his maw;
Typhoeus joynts were stretched on a gin;
Theseus condemned to endlesse slouth by
law;
And fifty sisters ⁴ water in leke vessels
draw. ³¹⁵

36

They all, beholding worldly wights in
place,
Leave off their worke, unmindefull of their
smart,
To gaze on them; who forth by them doe
pace,
Till they be come unto the furthest part;
Where was a Cave ywrought by wondrous
art. ³²⁰
Deepe, darke, uneasy, dolefull, comfortlesse.
In which sad Æsculapius ⁵ far apart
Emprisoned was in chaines remedlesse;
For that Hippolytus rent corse he did re-
dresse.

37

Hippolytus a jolly huntsman was, ³²⁵
That wont in charett chace the foming bore:

¹ fiercely.

² snarl.

³ cease.

⁴ The Danaides.

⁵ God of medicine.

He all his Peeres in beauty did surpas,
 But Ladies love as losse of time forbore:
 His wanton stepdame loved him the more;
 But, when she saw her offred sweets re-
 fused, 330
 Her love she turnd to hate, and him before
 Her father fierce of treason false accusd,
 And with her gealous termes his open eares
 abusd:

38

Who, all in rage, his Sea-god syre besought
 Some cursd vengeance on his sonne to
 cast. 335
 From surging gulf two Monsters streight
 were brought,
 With dread whereof his chacing steedes
 aghost
 Both charett swifte and huntsman overcast:
 His goodly corps, on ragged cliffs yrent,
 Was quite dismembred, and his members
 chast 340
 Scattered on every mountaine as he went,
 That of Hippolytus was lefte no monument.

39

His cruell step-dame, seeing what was
 donne,
 Her wicked daies with wretched knife did
 end,
 In death avowing th' innocence of her
 sonne. 345
 Which hearing, his rash syre began to rend
 His heare, and hasty tong that did offend:
 Tho, gathering up the reliques of his smart,
 By Dianes meanes, who was Hippolyts frend,
 Them brought to Æsculape, that by his
 art 350
 Did heale them all againe, and joynd every
 part.

40

Such wondrous science in mans witt to rain
 When Jove avizd, that could the dead revive,
 And fates expired could renew again,
 Of endlesse life he might him not deprive; 355
 But unto hell did thrust him downe alive,
 With flashing thunderbolt ywounded sore:
 Where, long remaining, he did alwaies strive
 Himselfe with salves to health for to restore,
 And slake the heavenly fire that ragd ever-
 more. 360

41

There auncient Night arriving did alight
 From her nigh weary wayne, and in her
 armes
 To Æsculapius brought the wounded knight:

Whome having softly disaraid of armes,
 Tho gan to him discover all his harmes, 365
 Beseeching him with prayer and with praise,
 If either salves, or oyles, or herbes, or
 charmcs,
 A fordonne wight from dore of death mote
 raise,
 He would at her request prolong her nephews
 daies.

42

"Ah Dame," (quoth he) "thou temptest
 me in vaine, 370
 To dare the thing, which daily yet I rew,
 And the old cause of my continued paine
 With like attempt to like end to renew.
 Is not enough, that, thrust from heaven dew,
 Here endlesse penaunce for one fault I pay, 375
 But that redoubled crime with vengeance
 new
 Thou biddest me to eeke? Can Night defray
 The wrath of thundring Jove, that rules both
 night and day?"

43

"Not so," (quoth she) "but, sith that
 heavens king
 From hope of heaven hath thee excluded
 quight, 380
 Why fearest thou, that canst not hope for
 thing;
 And fearest not that more thee hurten might,
 Now in the powre of everlasting Night?
 Goe to then, O thou far renowned sonne
 Of great Apollo! shew thy famous might 385
 In medicine, that els hath to thee wonne
 Great pains, and greater praise, both never to
 be donne."

44

Her words prevaild: And then the learned
 leach
 His cunning hand gan to his wounds to lay,
 And all things els the which his art did
 teach: 390
 Which having seene, from thence arose away
 The mother of dredd darknesse, and let stay
 Aveugles sonne there in the leaches cure;
 And, backe retourning, took her wonted way
 To ronne her timely race, whilst Phoebus
 pure 395
 In westernne waves his weary wagon did
 recure.

45

The false Duessa, leaving noyous Night,
 Returnd to stately pallace of Dame Pryde:
 i. increase.

Where when she came, she found the Faery
knight

Departed thence; albee his woundes wyde 400
Not thoroughly heald unready were to ryde.
Good cause he had to hasten thence away;
For on a day his wary Dwarfe had spyde
Where in a dungeon deepe huge nombers lay
Of cative wretched thralls, that wayled
night and day. 405

46

A ruefull sight as could be seene with eie,
Of whom he learned had in secret wise
The hidden cause of their captivitie;
How mortgaging their lives to Covetise,
Through wastfull Pride and wanton
Riotise, 410
They were by law of that proud Tyrannesse,
Provokt with Wrath and Envyes false sur-
mise,
Condemned to that Dongeon mercilesse,
Where they should live in wo, and dye in
wretchednesse.

47

There was that great proud king of
Babylon,¹ 415
That would compell all nations to adore,
And him as onely God to call upon;
Till, through celestial doome thrown out of
dore,
Into an Oxe he was transformd of yore.
There also was king Cræsus, that en-
haunst 420
His hart too high through his great richesse
store;
And proud Antiochus,² the which advaunst
His cursed hand gainst God, and on his
altares daunst.

48

And them long time before, great Nimrod
was,
That first the world with sword and fire
warrayd; 425
And after him old Ninus³ far did pas
In princely pomp, of all the world obayd.
There also was that mightie Monarch⁴ layd
Low under all, yet above all in pride,
That name of native syre did fowle up-
braid, 430
And would as Ammons⁵ sonne be magnifide,
Till, scornd of God and man, a shamefull
death he dide.

¹ Nebuchadnezzar.

² King of Syria, second century B.C., twice conqueror
of Jerusalem.

³ Reputed founder of Nineveh.

⁴ Alexander the Great. ⁵ Jupiter Ammon.

49

All these together in one heape were
throwne,
Like carkases of beastes in butchers stall.
And in another corner wide were strowne 435
The Antique ruins of the Romanes fall;
Great Romulus, the Grandsyre of them all;
Proud Tarquin, and too lordly Lentulus;
Stout Scipio, and stubborne Hanniball;
Ambitious Sylla, and sterne Marius; 440
High Caesar, great Pompey, and fiers An-
tonius.

50

Amongst these mightie men were wemen
mixt,
Proud wemen, vaine, forgetfull of their yoke:
The bold Semiramis,¹ whose sides transfixt
With sonnes own blade her fowle reproches
spoke: 445
Fayre Sthenobœa,² that her selfe did choke
With wilfull chord for wanting of her will;
High minded Cleopatra, that with stroke
Of Aspes sting her selfe did stoutly kill;
And thousands moe the like that did that
dongeon fill. 450

51

Besides the endlesse routes of wretched
thralls,
Which thither were assembled day by day
From all the world, after their wofull falles,
Through wicked pride and wasted welthes
decay.
But most of all, which in that dongeon
lay, 455
Fell from high Princes courtes, or Ladies
bowres,
Where they in ydle pomp, or wanton play,
Consumed had their goods and thriftlesse
howres,
And lastly thrown themselves into these
heavy stowres.³

52

Whose case whenas the careful Dwarfe had
tould, 460
And made ensample of their mournful sight
Unto his Maister, he no lenger would
There dwell in perill of like painefull plight,
But earely rose; and, ere that dawning light
Discovered had the world to heaven wyde,
He by a privy Posterne tooke his flight, 466
That of no envious eyes he mote be spyde;
For, doubtlesse, death ensewd if any him
descryde.

¹ Early queen of Assyria.

² Wife of Prætus.

³ sorrows.

53

Scarse could he footing find in that fowle
way,
For many corses, like a great Lay-stall,¹ 470
Of murdred men, which therein strowed lay
Without remorse or decent funeral; 475
Which al through that great Princesse pride
did fall,
And came to shamefull end. And them
besyde,
Forth ryding underneath the castell wall, 475
A Donghill of dead carcases he spyde;
The dreadfull spectacle of that sad house of
Pryde.

CANTO VI

From lawlesse lust by wondrous grace
Fayre Una is releast:
Whom salvage² nation does adore,
And learns her wise beheast.

1

As when a ship, that flies fayre under sayle,
An hidden rocke escaped hath unwares,
That lay in waite her wrack for to bewaile,
The Marriner yet halfe amazed stares
At perill past, and yet in doubt ne dares 5
To joy at his foolhappie oversight:
So doubly is distrest twixt joy and cares
The dreadlesse corage of this Elfin knight,
Having escapt so sad ensamples in his sight.

2

Yet sad he was, that his too hastie speed 10
The fayre Duess' had forst him leave behind;
And yet more sad, that Una, his deare dreed,³
Her truth had staynd with treason so unkind:
Yet cryme in her could never creature find;
But for his love, and for her own selfe sake, 15
She wandred had from one to other Ynd,
Him for to seeke, ne ever would forsake.
Till her unwares the fiers Sansloy **did over-**
take:

3

Who after Archimagoes fowle defeat,
Led her away into a forrest wilde, 20
And turning wrathfull fire to lustfull heat,
With beastly sin thought her to have defiled,
And made the vassall of his pleasures vilde.
Yet first he cast by treatie, and by traynes,
Her to perswade, that stubbornne fort to
yilde: 25
For greater conquest of hard love he gaynes,
That workes it to his will, then he that it con-
straines.

¹ refuse pile. ² savage.
³ i.e., object worshiped.

4

With fawning wordes he courted her a
while,
And looking lovely, and oft sighing sore,
Her constant hart did tempt with diverse
guile: 30
But wordes, and lookes, and sighes she did
abhorre,
As rocke of Diamond stedfast evermore.
Yet for to feed his fyrie lustfull eye,
He snatcht the vele, that hong her face
before;
Then gan her beautie shine, as brightest
skye, 35
And burnt his beastly hart t'efforce her
chastitye.

5

So when he saw his flatt'ring arts to fayle,
And subtile engines bet from batteree,
With greedy force he gan the fort assayle,
Whereof he weend possessed soone to bee, 40
And win rich spoile of ransackt chastetee.
Ah heavens, that do this hideous act behold,
And heavenly virgin thus outraged see,
How can ye vengeance just so long withhold,
And hurle not flashing flames upon that Pay-
nim bold? 45

6

The pitteous mayden, carefull, comfort-
lesse,
Does throw out thrilling shriekes, and shriek-
ing cryes,
The last vaine helpe of wemens great dis-
tresse,
And with loud plaintes importuneth the
skyes,
That molten starres doe drop like weeping
eyes; 50
And Phcebus, flying so most shamefull sight,
His blushing face in foggy cloud implyes,
And hydes for shame. What witt of mortal
wight
Can now devise to quitt a thrall from such a
plight?

7

Eternall providence, exceeding thought, 55
Where none appeares can make her selfe a
way.
A wondrous way it for this Lady wrought,
From Lyons clawes to pluck the gryped pray.
Her shrill outcryes and shrieks so loud did
bray,
That all the woodes and forestes did re-
sownd: 60
A troupe of Faunes and Satyres far away

Within the wood were dauncing in a rownd,
Whiles old Sylvanus slept in shady arber
sownd:

8

Who, when they heard that pitteous
strained voice,
In haste forsooke their rurall meriment, 65
And ran towards the far rebownded noyce,
To weet what wight so loudly did lament.
Unto the place they come incontinent:¹
Whom when the raging Sarazin espyde,
A rude, mishapen, monstrous rablement, 70
Whose like he never saw, he durst not byde,
But got his ready steed, and fast away gan
ryde.

9

The wyld woodgods, arrived in the place,
There find the virgin, doolfull, desolate,
With ruffled rayments, and fayre blubbred
face, 75
As her outrageous foe had left her late;
And trembling yet through feare of former
hate.
All stand amazed at so uncouth sight,
And gin to pittie her unhappie state:
All stand astonied at her beautie bright, 80
In their rude eyes unworthie of so wofull
plight.

10

She, more amazd, in doublè dread doth
dwell;
And every tender part for feare does shake.
As when a greedy Wolfe, through hunger
fell,
A seely Lamb far from the flock does take, 85
Of whom he meanes his bloody feast to make,
A Lyon spyes fast running towards him,
The innocent pray in hast he does forsake;
Which, quitt from death, yet quakes in every
lim
With chaunge of feare, to see the Lyon looke
so grim. 90

11

Such fearefull fitt assaid her trembling
hart,
Ne word to speake, ne joynt to move, she
had;
The salvage nation feele her secret smart,
And read her sorrow in her count'nance sad;
Their frowning forheades, with rough hornes
yclad, 95
And rustick horror, all asyde doe lay;
And, gently grenning, shew a semblance glad

¹ without delaying.

To comfort her; and, feare to put away,
Their backward bent knees teach her humbly
to obay.

12

The doubtfull Damzell dare not yet com-
mitt 100
Her single person to their barbarous truth;
But still twixt feare and hope amazd does
sitt,
Late learnd what harme to hasty trust en-
su'th.
They, in compassion of her tender youth,
And wonder of her beautie soverayne, 105
Are wonne with pitty and unwonted ruth;
And, all prostrate upon the lowly playne,
Doe kisse her feete, and fawne on her with
count'nance fayne.

13

Their harts she ghessest by their humble
guise,
And yieldees her to extremitie of time: 110
So from the ground she fearelesse doth arise,
And walketh forth without suspect of crime.
They, all as glad as birdes of joyous Pryme,¹
Thence lead her forth, about her dauncing
round,
Shouting, and singing all a shepheards
ryme; 115
And with greene braunches strowing all the
ground,
Do worship her as Queene with olive girlond
cround.

14

And all the way their merry pipes they
sound,
That all the woods with doubled Eccho
ring;
And with their horned feet doe weare the
ground, 120
Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant Spring.
So towards old Sylvanus they her bring;
Who, with the noyse awaked, commeth out
To weet the cause, his weake steps gov-
erning²
And aged limbs on cypresse stadle³ stout; 125
And with an yvie twyne his waste is girt
about.

15

Far off he wonders what them makes so
glad,
Or Bacchus merry fruit they did invent,⁴

¹ springtime.

² This participle is transposed from its normal place
before *his*.

³ staff.

⁴ discover, find.

Or Cybeles franticke rites have made them
 mad:
 They, drawing nigh, unto their God pre-
 sent 130
 That flowre of fayth and beautie excellent.
 The God himselfe, vewing that mirrhour
 rare,
 Stood long amazd, and burnt in his intent:
 His owne fayre Dryope ¹ now he thinkes not
 faire,
 And Pholoe ² fowle, when her to this he doth
 compaire. 135

16

The woodborne people fall before her flat,
 And worship her as Goddesses of the wood;
 And old Sylvanus selfe bethinkes not what
 To thinke of wight so fayre, but gazing stood
 In doubt to deeme her borne of earthly
 brood: 140
 Sometimes dame Venus selfe he seemes to see;
 But Venus never had so sober mood:
 Sometimes Diana he her takes to be,
 But misseth bow and shaftes, and buskins to
 her knee.

17

By vew of her he ginneth to revive 145
 His ancient love, and dearest Cyparisse; ³
 And calles to mind his pourtraiture alive,
 How fayre he was, and yet not fayre to this;
 And how he slew with glauncing dart amisse
 A gentle Hynd, the which the lovely boy 150
 Did love as life, above all worldly blisse;
 For grieve whereof the lad n'ould after joy,
 But pynd away in anguish and selfe-wild
 annoy.

18

The wooddy nymphes, faire Hamadryades,
 Her to behold do thither runne apace; 155
 And all the troupe of light-foot Naiades
 Flocke all about to see her lovely face;
 But, when they vewed have her heavenly
 grace,
 They envy her in their malicious mind,
 And fly away for feare of fowle disgrace. 160
 But all the Satyres scorne their woody kind,
 And henceforth nothing faire but her on
 earth they find.

19

Glad of such lucke, the luckelesse lucky
 mayd
 Did her content to please their feeble eyes,

¹ His wife.² A nymph.³ Sylvanus loved this youth, who was turned into a cypress at his death.

And long time with that salvage people
 stayd, 165
 To gather breath in many miseries.
 During which time her gentle wit she plyes
 To teach them truth, which worshipt her in
 vaine,
 And made her th' Image of Idolatryes;
 But when their bootlesse zeale she did
 restrayne 170
 From her own worship, they her Asse would
 worship fayn.

20

It fortun'd, a noble warlike knight
 By just occasion to that forrest came
 To seeke his kindred, and the lignage right
 From whence he tooke his weldeserved
 name: 175
 He had in armes abroad wonne muchell fame,
 And fild far landes with glorie of his might;
 Plaine, faithfull, true, and enemy of shame,
 And ever lov'd to fight for Ladies right;
 But in vaine glorious frayes he litle did
 delight. 180

21

A Satyres sonne, yborne in forrest wyld,
 By straunge adventure as it did betyde,
 And there begotten of a Lady myld,
 Fayre Thyamis, the daughter of Labryde;
 That was in sacred bandes of wedlocke
 tyde 185
 To Therion, a loose unruly swayne,
 Who had more joy to raunge the forrest
 wyde,
 And chase the salvage beast with busie
 payne,
 Then serve his Ladies love, and waste in
 pleasures vayne.

22

The forlorne mayd did with loves longing
 burne, 190
 And could not lacke her lovers company,
 But to the wood she goes, to serve her turne,
 And seeke her spouse, that from her still does
 fly,
 And followes other game and venery:
 A Satyre chaunst her wandring for to
 find, 195
 And kindling coles of lust in brutish eye,
 The loyall links of wedlocke did unbind,
 And made her person thrall unto his beastly
 kind.

23

So long in secret cabin there he held
 Her captive to his sensuall desire, 200

Till that with timely fruit her belly sweld,
And bore a boy unto that salvage sire:
Then home he suffred her for to retire,
For ransome leaving him the late borne
childe;

Whom till to ryper yeares he gan aspire, 205
He nourled up in life and manners wilde,
Eamongst wild beasts and woods, from lawes
of men exilde.

24

For all he taught the tender ymp was but
To banish cowardize and bastard feare:
His trembling hand he would him force to
put 210
Upon the Lyon and the rugged Beare;
And from the she Beares teats her whelps to
teare;
And eke wyld roring Buls he would him make
To tame, and ryde their backes, not made to
beare;
And the Robuckes in flight to overtake, 215
That everie beast for feare of him did fly, and
quake.

25

Thereby so fearlesse and so fell he grew,
That his own syre, and maister of his guise,¹
Did often tremble at his horrid vew;
And oft, for dread of hurt, would him ad-
vise 220
The angry beastes not rashly to despise,
Nor too much to provoke; for he would learne
The Lyon stoup to him in lowly wise,
(A lesson hard) and make the Libbard²
sterne
Leave roaring, when in rage he for revenge
did earne. 225

26

And for to make his powre approved more,
Wyld beastes in yron yokes he would compell;
The spotted Panther, and the tusked Bore,
The Pardale³ swift, and the Tigre cruell,
The Antelope, and Wolfe both fiers and
fell; 230
And them constraine in equall teme to draw.
Such joy he had their stubborne harts to
quell,
And sturdie courage tame with dreadfull aw,
That his beheast they feared as a tyrans law.

27

His loving mother came upon a day 235
Unto the woodes, to see her little sonne;
And chaunst unwares to meet him in the
way,

1 manner. 2 leopard. 3 panther.

After his sportes and cruell pastime donne;
When after him a Lyonesse did runne,
That roaring all with rage did lowd re-
quere 240
Her children deare, whom he away had
wonne:

The Lyon whelpes she saw how he did beare,
And lull in rugged armes withouten childish
feare.

28

The fearefull Dame all quaked at the sight,
And turning backe gan fast to fly away; 245
Untill, with love revokt from vaine affright,
She hardly yet perswaded was to stay,
And then to him these womanish words gan
say:

"Ah Satyrane, my dearling and my joy,
For love of me leave off this dreadfull
play; 250
To dally thus with death is no fit toy:
Go, find some other play-fellowes, mine own
sweet boy."

29

In these and like delightes of bloody game
He trayned was, till ryper years he raught;¹
And there abode, whylst any beast of
name 255
Walkt in that forrest, whom he had not
taught
To feare his force: and then his courage
haught²
Desyrd of forreine foemen to be knowne,
And far abroad for straunge adventures
sought;
In which his might was never over-
throwne; 260
But through al Faery lond his famous worth
was blown.

30

Yet evermore it was his maner faire,
After long labours and adventures spent,
Unto those native woods for to reparaie,
To see his syre and ofspring auncient. 265
And now he thither came for like intent;
Where he unwares the fairest Una found,
Straunge Lady in so straunge habiliment,
Teaching the Satyres, which her sat around,
Trew sacred lore, which from her sweet lips
did redound. 270

31

He wondred at her wisdoms heavenly rare,
Whose like in womens witt he never knew;
And, when her curteous deeds he did compare,

1 reached. 2 great.

Gan her admire, and her sad sorrowes rew,
Blaming of Fortune, which such troubles
threw, 275

And joyd to make proove of her cruelty
On gentle Dame, so hurtlesse¹ and so trew:
Thenceforth he kept her goodly company,
And leard her discipline of faith and verity.

32

But she, all vovd unto the Redcrosse
Knight, 280
His wandring perill closely did lament,
Ne in this new acquaintaunce could delight;
But her deare heart with anguish did torment,
And all her witt in secret counsels spent,
How to escape. At last in privy wise 285
To Satyrane she shewed her intent;
Who, glad to gain such favour, gan devise,
How with that pensive Maid he best might
thence arise.

33

So on a day, when Satyres all were gone
To do their service to Sylvanus old, 290
The gentle virgin, left behinde alone,
He led away with corage stout and bold.
Too late it was to Satyres to be told,
Or ever hope recover her againe:
In vaine he seekes that having cannot
hold. 295
So fast he carried her with carefull paine,
That they the woods are past, and come now
to the plaine.

34

The better part now of the lingring day
They traveild had, whenas they far espide
A weary wight forwandring by the way; 300
And towards him they gan in haste to ride,
To weete of newes that did abroad betide,
Or tidings of her knight of the Redcrosse;
But he them spyng gan to turne aside
For feare, as seemd, or for some feigned
losse: 305
More greedy they of newes fast towards him
do crosse.

35

A silly² man, in simple weeds forworne,
And soild with dust of the long dried way;
His sandales were with toilsome travell torne,
And face all tand with scorching sunny
ray, 310
As he had traveild many a sommers day
Through boyling sands of Arabie and Ynde,
And in his hand a Jacobs staffe,³ to stay

¹ harmless, innocent.² seely, i.e., simple.³ pilgrim's staff, so called after Saint James or Jacobus.

His weary limbs upon; and eke behind
His scrip did hang, in which his needments he
did bind. 315

36

The knight, approaching nigh, of him in-
querd
Tidings of warre, and of adventures new;
But warres, nor new adventures, none he
herd.
Then Una gan to aske, if ought he knew,
Or heard abroad of that her champion
trew, 320
That in his armour bare a croslet red?
"Ay me! Deare dame," (quoth he) "well
may I rew
To tell the sad sight which mine eies have
red;
These eies did see that knight both living and
eke ded."

37

That cruell word her tender hart so
thrild, 325
That suddein cold did ronne through every
vaine,
And stony horror all her sences fild
With dying fitt, that downe she fell for
paine.
The knight her lightly reared up againe,
And comforted with curteous kind reliefe: 330
Then, wonne from death, she bad him tellen
plaine
The further processe of her hidden grieve:
The lesser pangs can beare who hath endur'd
the chief.

38

Then gan the Pilgrim thus: "I chaunst this
day,
This fatal day that shall I ever rew, 335
To see two knights, in travell on my way,
(A sory sight) arraung'd in batteill new,
Both breathing vengeaunce, both of wrath-
full hew.
My feareful flesh did tremble at their strife,
To see their blades so greedily imbrew, 340
That, dronke with blood, yet thirsted after
life:
What more? the Redcrosse knight was slain
with Paynim knife."

39

"Ah! dearest Lord," (quoth she) "how
might that bee,
And he the stoutest knight that ever wonne?"
"Ah! dearest dame," (quoth hee) "how
might I see 345

The thing that might not be, and yet was
donne?"

"Where is," (said Satyrane) "that Paynims
sonne,

That him of life, and us of joy, hath refte?"

"Not far away," (quoth he) "he hence doth
wonne,"

Foreby a fountaine, where I late him lefte 350

Washing his bloody wounds, that through
the steele were cleft."

40

Therewith the knight thence marched
forth in hast,

Whiles Una, with huge heavinesse opprest,

Could not for sorrow follow him so fast;

And soone he came, as he the place had
ghest, 355

Whereas that Pagan proud him selfe did rest

In secret shadow by a fountaine side:

Even he it was, that earst would have sup-
prest

Faire Una; whom when Satyrane espide,

With foule reprochfull words he boldly him
defide. 360

41

And said; "Arise, thou cursed Miscreant,
That hast with knightlesse guile, and trecher-

ous train,

Faire knighthood fowly shamed, and doest
vaunt

That good knight of the Redcrosse to have
slain:

Arise, and with like treason now maintain 365

Thy guilty wrong, or els thee guilty yield."

The Sarazin, this hearing, rose amain,

And, catching up in hast his three-square
shield

And shining helmet, soone him buckled to the
field.

42

And, drawing nigh him, said; "Ah! mis-
born Elfe, 370

In evill houre thy foes thee hither sent

Another wrongs to wreak upon thy selfe:

Yet ill thou blamest me for having blent

My name with guile and traiterous intent:

That Redcrosse knight, perdie,² I never
slew; 375

But had he beene where earst his armes were
lent,

Th' enchaunter vaine his errour should not
rew:

But thou his errour shalt, I hope, now proven
trew."

1 live.

2 in truth.

43

Therewith they gan, both furious and fell,

To thunder blowes, and fiersly to assaile 380

Each other, bent his enemy to quell,

That with their force they perst both plate
and maile,

And made wide furrowes in their fleshs fraile,

That it would pittie any living eie.

Large floods of blood adowne their sides did
raile; 385

But floods of blood could not them satisfie:

Both hongred after death; both chose to win,
or die.

44

So long they fight, and full revenge pursue,
That, fainting, each themselves to breathe

lett,

And, ofte refreshed, battell oft renew. 390

As when two Bores, with rancling malice mett,

Their gory sides fresh bleeding fiercely fret;

Til breathlesse both themselves aside retire,

Where foming wrath their cruell tuskes they
whett,

And trample th' earth, the whiles they may
respire, 395

Then backe to fight againe, new breathed and
entire.

45

So fiersly, when these knights had breathed
once,

They gan to fight retourne, increasing more
Their puissant force, and cruell rage attonce,

With heaped strokes more hugely then
before; 400

That with their drery wounds, and bloody
gore,

They both, deformed, scarsely could bee
known.

By this, sad Una fraught with anguish sore,
Led with their noise which through the aire

was thrown,

Arriv'd wher they in erth their fruitles blood
had sown. 405

46

Whom all so soone as that proud Sarazin

Espide, he gan revive the memory

Of his leud lusts, and late attempted sin,

And lefte the doubtfull battell hastily,

To catch her, newly offred to his eie; 410

But Satyrane, with strokes him turning,
staid,

And sternely bad him other businesse plie,

Then hunt the steps of pure unspotted Maid:

Wherewith he al enrag'd these bitter
speeches said.

47

"O foolish faeries sonne! what fury mad⁴⁷⁵
 Hath thee incenst to hast thy dolefull fate?
 Were it not better I that Lady had
 Then that thou hadst repented it too late?
 Most sencelesse man he, that himselfe doth
 hate,
 To love another: Lo! then, for thine ayd,⁴²⁰
 Here take thy lovers token on thy pate."
 So they to fight; the whiles the royall Mayd
 Fledd farre away, of that proud Paynim sore
 afrayd.

48

But that false Pilgrim, which that leasing¹
 told,
 Being in deed old Archimage, did stay⁴²⁵
 In secret shadow all this to behold;
 And much rejoyced in their bloody fray:
 But, when he saw the Damsell passe away,
 He left his stond, and her pursewd apace,
 In hope to bring her to her last decay.⁴³⁰
 But for to tell her lamentable cace,
 And eke this battels end, will need another
 place.

CANTO VII

The Redcrosse knight is captive made
 By Gyaunt proud opprest:
 Prince Arthure meets with Una great-
 ly with those newes distrest.

1

What man so wise, what earthly witt so
 ware,
 As to discry the crafty cunning traine,
 By which deceipt doth maske in visour²
 faire,
 And cast her coulours, died deepe in graine,³
 To seeme like truth, whose shape she well can
 faine,⁵
 And fitting gestures to her purpose frame,
 The guiltlesse man with guile to entertaine?
 Great maistresse of her art was that false
 Dame,
 The false Duessa, cloked with Fidessaes name.

2

Who when, returning from the drery
 Night,¹⁰
 She fownd not in that perilous hous of Pryde,
 Where she had left the noble Redcrosse
 knight,
 Her hoped pray, she would no lenger byde,
 But forth she went to seeke him far and wide.
 Ere long she fownd, whereas he wearie
 sate¹⁵

1 falsehood.

2 disguise.

3 fast color.

To reste him selfe foreby a fountaine syde,
 Disarmed all of yron-coted Plate;
 And by his side his steed the grassy forage
 ate.

3

Hee feedes upon the cooling shade, and
 bayes¹
 His sweatie forehead in the breathing
 wynd,²⁰
 Which through the trembling leaves full
 gently playes,
 Wherein the chearefull birds of sundry kynd
 Doe chaunt sweet musick to delight his
 mynd.
 The witch approching gan him fayrely greet,
 And with reproch of carelesnes unkynd²⁵
 Upbrayd, for leaving her in place unmeet,
 With fowle words tempring faire, soure gall
 with hony sweet.

4

Unkindnesse past, they gan of solace treat,
 And bathe in pleasaunce of the joyous shade,
 Which shielded them against the boyling
 heat,³⁰
 And with greene boughes decking a gloomy
 glade,
 About the fountaine like a girlond made;
 Whose bubbling wave did ever freshly well,
 Ne ever would through fervent sommer fade:
 The sacred Nymph, which therein wont to
 dwell,³⁵
 Was out of Dianes favor, as it then befell.

5

The cause was this: one day, when Phœbe²
 fayre
 With all her band was following the chace,
 This nymph, quite tyr'd with heat of scorch-
 ing ayre,
 Satt downe to rest in midst of the race:⁴⁰
 The goddesse wroth gan fowly her disgrace,
 And badd the waters, which from her did
 flow,
 Be such as she her selfe was then in place.
 Thenceforth her waters waxed dull and slow,
 And all that drinke thereof do faint and
 feeble grow.⁴⁵

6

Hereof this gentle knight unweeting was;
 And lying downe upon the sandie graile,³
 Dronke of the streame, as cleare as christall
 glas:

1 bathes.

2 Diana, goddess of the chase, sister of Phœbus Apollo.

3 gravel.

Eftsoones his manly forces gan to fayle.
 And mightie strong was turnd to feeble
 frayle.⁵⁰
 His chaunged powres at first them selves not
 felt;
 Till crudled cold his corage gan assayle,
 And cheareful blood in fayntnes chill did
 melt,
 Which like a fever fit through all his bodie
 swelt.¹

7

Yet goodly court he made still to his
 Dame,⁵⁵
 Poured out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd,
 Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame;
 Till at the last he heard a dreadfull sownd,
 Which through the wood loud bellowing did
 rebownd,
 That all the earth for terror seemd to
 shake,⁶⁰
 And trees did tremble. Th' Elfe, therewith
 astownd,
 Upstartd lightly from his looser make,²
 And his unready weapons gan in hand to
 take.

8

But ere he could his armour on him dight,
 Or gett his shield, his monstrous enemy⁶⁵
 With sturdie steps came stalking in his
 sight,
 An hideous Geaunt,³ horrible and hye,
 That with his tallnesse seemd to threat the
 skye;
 The ground eke groned under him for dreed:
 His living like saw never living eye,⁷⁰
 Ne durst behold: his stature did exceed
 The hight of three the tallest sonnes of
 mortall seed.

9

The greatest Earth his uncouth mother
 was,
 And blustering Æolus his boasted sire,
 Who with his breath, which through the
 world doth pas,⁷⁵
 Her hollow womb did secretly inspire,
 And fild her hidden caves with stormie yre,
 That she conceiv'd; and trebling the dew
 time,
 In which the wombes of women do expire,
 Brought forth this monstrous masse of
 earthly slime,⁸⁰
 Puft up with emptie wind, and fild with sin-
 full crime.

¹ swelled, burned.
² Orgoglio, or Pride.

³ companion.

10

So growen great, through arrogant delight
 Of th' high descent whereof he was yborne,
 And through presumption of his matchlesse
 might,
 All other powres and knighthood he did
 scorne.⁸⁵
 Such now he marcheth to this man forlorne,
 And left to losse;¹ his stalking steps are
 stayde
 Upon a snaggy Oke, which he had torne
 Out of his mothers bowelles, and it made
 His mortall mace, wherewith his foemen he
 dismayde.⁹⁰

11

That, when the knight he spyde, he gan
 advaunce
 With huge force and insupportable mayne,²
 And towards him with dreadfull fury
 prauince;
 Who haplesse, and eke hopelesse, all in vaine
 Did to him pace sad battaile to darrayne,⁹⁵
 Disarmd, disgraste, and inwardly dismayde;
 And eke so faint in every joynt and vayne,
 Through that fraile fountain which him
 feeble made,
 That scarcely could he weeld his bootlesse
 single blade.

12

The Geaunt strooke so maynly merci-
 lesse,¹⁰⁰
 That could have overthrowne a stony towre;
 And, were not hevenly grace that did him
 blesse,
 He had bene pouldred³ all as thin as flowre:
 But he was wary of that deadly stowre,
 And lightly lept from underneath the
 blow:¹⁰⁵
 Yet so exceeding was the villeins powre,
 That with the winde it did him overthrow,
 And all his sences stound that still he lay full
 low.

13

As when that divelish yron Engin, wrought
 In deepest Hell, and framd by Furies
 skill,¹¹⁰
 With windy Nitre and quick Sulphur fraught,
 And ramd with bollet rownd, ordaind to kill,
 Conceiveth fyre, the heavens it doth fill
 With thundering noyse, and all the ayre doth
 choke,
 That none can breath, nor see, nor heare at
 will,¹¹⁵

¹ destruction.
³ powdered, beaten.

² strength.

Through smouldry cloud of duskish stincking
 smoke;
 That th' only breath him daunts, who hath
 escapt the stroke.

14

So daunted¹ when the Geaunt saw the
 knight,
 His heaue hand he heaved up on hye,
 And him to dust thought to have battred
 quight, 120
 Untill Duessa loud to him gan crye,
 "O great Orgoglio! greatest under skye,
 O! hold thy mortall² hand for Ladies sake;
 Hold for my sake, and doe him not to dye,
 But vanquisht thine eternall bondslave
 make, 125
 And me, thy worthy meed, unto thy Leman
 take."

15

He hearkned, and did stay from further
 harmes,
 To gayne so goodly guerdon as she spake:³
 So willingly she came into his armes,
 Who her as willingly to grace did take, 130
 And was possessed of his newfound make.
 Then up he tooke the slombred⁴ sencelesse
 corse,
 And, ere he could out of his swowne awake,
 Him to his castle brought with hastie forse,
 And in a Dongeon deepe him threw without
 remorse. 135

16

From that day forth Duessa was his deare,
 And highly honourd in his haughtie eye:
 He gave her gold and purple pall to weare,
 And triple crowne set on her head full hye,
 And her endowd with royall majesty. 140
 Then, for to make her dreaded more of men,
 And peoples hartes with awfull terror tye,
 A monstrous beast ybredd in filthy fen
 He chose, which he had kept long time in
 darksom den.

17

Such one it was, as that renowned
 Snake 145
 Which great Alcides⁵ in Stremona slew,
 Long fostred in the filth of Lerna lake:
 Whose many heades, out budding ever new,
 Did breed him endlesse labor to subdew.
 But this same Monster much more ugly
 was, 150

For seven great heads out of his body grew,
 An yron brest, and back of scaly bras,
 And all embrewd in blood his eyes did shine
 as glas.

18

His tayle was stretched out in wondrous
 length,
 That to the hous of hevenly gods it
 rought:¹ 155
 And with extorted powre, and borrow'd
 strength,
 The everburning lamps from thence it
 brought,
 And proudly threw to ground, as things of
 naught:
 And underneath his filthy feet did tread
 The sacred thinges, and holy heastes² fore-
 taught.³ 160
 Upon this dreadfull Beast with sevenfold
 head
 He sett the false Duessa, for more aw and
 dread.

19

The wofull Dwarfe, which saw his maisters
 fall
 Whiles he had keeping of his grasing steed,
 And valiant knight become a caytive
 thrall, 165
 When all was past, tooke up his forlorne⁴
 weed;⁵
 His mightie Armour, missing most at need;
 His silver shield, now idle, maisterlesse;
 His poynant speare that many made to
 bleed,
 The rueful moniments of heavinesse; 170
 And with them all departes to tell his great
 distresse.

20

He had not travaild long, when on the
 way
 He wofull Lady, wofull Una, met,
 Fast flying from that Paynims greedy pray,⁶
 Whilest Satyrane him from pursuit did
 let:⁷ 175
 Who when her eyes she on the Dwarf had
 set,
 And saw the signes that deadly tydinges
 spake,
 She fell to ground for sorrowfull regret,
 And lively⁸ breath her sad brest did forsake;
 Yet might her pitteous hart be seene to pant
 and quake. 180

¹ modifies knight.² deadly.³ "as good a reward as she said it was."⁴ unconscious.⁵ Hercules.¹ reached.² behests.³ taught before or previously.⁵ attire.⁶ plunder.⁸ life-supporting.⁴ abandoned.⁷ hinder.

21

The messenger of so unhappie newes
 Would faine have dyde: dead was his hart
 within,
 Yet outwardly some little comfort shewes.
 At last, recovering hart, he does begin
 To rubb her temples, and to chaufe her
 chin, 185
 And everie tender part does tosse and turne:
 So hardly he the flitted life does win
 Unto her native prison to retourne;
 Then gins her grieved ghost thus to lament
 and mourne:

22

"Ye dreary instruments of dolefull
 sight, 190
 That doe this deadly spectacle behold,
 Why doe ye lenger feed on loathed light,
 Or liking find to gaze on earthly mould,
 Sith cruell fates the carefull threds un-
 fould,
 The which my life and love together tyde? 195
 Now let the stony dart of sencelesse cold
 Perce to my hart, and pas through everie
 side,
 And let eternall night so sad sight fro me
 hyde.

23

"O lightsome day! the lampe of highest
 Jove,
 First made by him mens wandring wayes to
 guyde, 200
 When darknesse he in deepest dongeon
 drove,
 Henceforth thy hated face for ever hyde,
 And shut up heavens windowes shyning
 wyde;
 For earthly sight can nought but sorrow
 breed,
 And late repentance which shall long
 abyde: 205
 Mine eyes no more on vanitie shall feed,
 But seeled up with death shall have their
 deadly meed."

24

Then downe againe she fell unto the
 ground,
 But he her quickly reared up againe:
 Thrise did she sinke adowne in deadly
 swownd, 210
 And thrise he her reviv'd with busie paine.
 At last when life recover'd had the raine,
 And over-wrestled his strong enemy,
 With foltring tong, and trembling everie
 vaine,

"Tell on," (quoth she) "the wofull Trag-
 edy, 215
 The which these reliques sad present unto
 mine eye.

25

"Tempestuous fortune hath spent all her
 spight,
 And thrilling sorrow throwne his utmost
 dart:
 Thy sad tong cannot tell more heavy plight
 Then that I feele, and harbour in mine
 hart: 220
 Who hath endur'd the whole can beare ech
 part.
 If death it be, it is not the first wound
 That launched hath my brest with bleeding
 smart.
 Begin, and end the bitter balefull stound;¹
 If lesse then that I feare, more favour I have
 found." 225

26

Then gan the Dwarfe the whole discourse
 declare;
 The subtle traines of Archimago old;
 The wanton loves of false Fidessa fayre,
 Bought with the blood of vanquisht Paynim
 bold;
 The wretched payre transformd to treën
 mould; 230
 The house of Pryde, and perilles round
 about;
 The combat which he with Sansjoy did
 hould;
 The lucklesse conflict with the Gyaunt stout,
 Wherein captiv'd, of life or death he stood in
 doubt.

27

She heard with patience all unto the
 end, 235
 And strove to maister sorrowfull assay,²
 Which greater grew the more she did contend,
 And almost rent her tender hart in tway,
 And love fresh coles unto her fire did lay;
 For greater love, the greater is the losse. 240
 Was never Lady loved dearer day³
 Then she did love the knight of the Red-
 crosse,
 For whose deare sake so many troubles her
 did tosse.

28

At last when fervent sorrow slaked was,
 She up arose, resolving him to find 245

¹ moment.² attack of sorrow.³ "No lady ever loved daylight dearer."

Alive or dead; and forward forth doth pas,
 All as the Dwarfe the way to her assynd;
 And evermore, in constant carefull mind,
 She fedd her wound with fresh renewed bale.
 Long tost with stormes, and bet with bitter
 wind, 250
 High over hills, and lowe adowne the dale,
 She wandred many a wood, and measurd
 many a valey.

29

At last she chaunced by good hap to meet
 A goodly knight, faire marching by the way,
 Together with his Squyre, arayed meet: 255
 His glitterand armour shined far away,
 Like glauncing light of Phœbus brightest ray;
 From top to toe no place appeared bare,
 That deadly dint of steele endanger may.
 Athwart his brest a bauldrick¹ brave he
 ware, 260
 That shind, like twinkling stars, with stones
 most pretious rare.

30

And in the midst thereof one pretious stone
 Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous
 mights,
 Shapt like a Ladies head, exceeding shone,
 Like Hesperus emongst the lesser lights, 265
 And strove for to amaze the weaker sights:
 Thereby his mortall blade full comely hong
 In yvory sheath, ycarv'd with curious slights,²
 Whose hilts were burnisht gold, and handle
 strong
 Of mother perle; and buckled with a golden
 tong. 270

31

His haughtie Helmet, horrid³ all with gold,
 Both glorious brightnesse and great terroure
 bredd:
 For all the crest a Dragon did enfold
 With greedie pawes, and over all did spredd
 His golden winges: his dreadfull hideous
 hedd, 275
 Close couched on the bever,⁴ seemd to throw
 From flaming mouth bright sparckles fiery
 redd,
 That suddeine horroure to faint hartes did
 show;
 And scaly tayle was stretcht adowne his back
 full low.

32

Upon the top of all his loftie crest, 280
 A bouch of heares discoloured diversly,

With sprinckled pearle and gold full richly
 drest,
 Did shake, and seemd to daunce for jollity,
 Like to an almond tree ymounted hye
 On top of greene Selinis¹ all alone, 285
 With blossoms brave bedecked daintily;
 Whose tender locks do tremble every one
 At everie litle breath that under heaven is
 blowne.

33

His warlike shield all closely cover'd was,
 Ne might of mortall eye be ever seene; 290
 Not made of steele, nor of enduring bras,
 Such earthly mettals soon consumed beene,
 But all of Diamond perfect pure and cleene
 It framed was, one massy entire mould,
 Hewen out of Adamant rocke with engines
 keene, 295
 That point of speare it never percen could,
 Ne dint of direfull sword divide the substance
 would.

34

The same to wight he never wont² disclose,
 But whenas monsters huge he would dismay,
 Or daunt unequall armies of his foes, 300
 Or when the flying heavens he would affray;
 For so exceeding shone his glistring ray,
 That Phœbus golden face it did attaint,
 As when a cloud his beames doth over-lay;
 And silver Cynthia³ waxed pale and
 faynt, 305
 As when her face is staynd with magicke arts
 constraint.

35

No magicke arts hereof had any might,
 Nor bloody wordes of bold Enchaunters call;
 But all that was not such as seemd in sight
 Before that shield did fade, and suddeine
 fall; 310
 And when him list⁴ the raskall routes appall,
 Men into stones therewith he could trans-
 mew,
 And stones to dust, and dust to nought at all;
 And, when him list the prouder lookes sub-
 dew,
 He would them gazing blind,⁵ or turne to
 other hew. 315

36

Ne let it seeme that credence this exceeds;
 For he that made the same was knowne right
 well
 To have done much more admirable deedes.

¹ belt.² designs.³ bristling.⁴ the lower, movable part of a helmet.¹ In Sicily.² was wont to.³ the moon.⁴ pleased.⁵ "blind them as they gazed."

It Merlin ¹ was, which whylome did excell
 All living wightes in might of magicke
 spell: ³²⁰
 Both shield and sword, and armour all he
 wrought
 For this young Prince, when first to armes he
 fell; ²
 But, when he dyde, the Faery Queene it
 brought
 To Faerie lond, where yet it may be seene, if
 sought:

37

A gentle youth, his dearely loved
 Squire, ³²⁵
 His speare of heben wood behind him bare,
 Whose harmeful head, thrise heated in the
 fire,
 Had riven many a brest with pikehead
 square:
 A goodly person, and could menage faire
 His stubborne steed with curbed canon ³
 bitt, ³³⁰
 Who under him did trample as the aire,
 And chaft that any on his backe should sitt:
 The yron rowels into frothy fome he bitt.

38

Whenas this knight nigh to the Lady drew,
 With lovely court he gan her entertaine; ³³⁵
 But, when he heard her answers loth, he
 knew
 Some secret sorrow did her heart distraine; ⁴
 Which to allay, and calme her storming
 paine,
 Faire feeling words he wisely gan display,
 And for her humor fitting purpose ⁵ faire, ³⁴⁰
 To tempt the cause it selfe for to bewray,
 Wherewith enmovd, these bleeding words she
 gan to say.

39

"What worlds delight, or joy of living
 speach,
 Can hart, so plungd in sea of sorrowes deep,
 And heaped with so huge misfortunes,
 reach? ³⁴⁵
 The carefull cold beginneth for to creep,
 And in my heart his yron arrow steep,
 Soone as I thinke upon my bitter bale.
 Such hellesse harmes yts better hidden
 keep,
 Then rip up grieve where it may not
 availe: ³⁵⁰
 My last left comfort is my woes to weepe and
 waile."

1 The great magician in the stories of the Round Table.
 2 took. 3 smooth. 4 tear. 5 conversation.

⁴⁰
 "Ah Lady deare," quoth then the gentle
 knight,
 "Well may I ween your grieve is wondrous
 great;
 For wondrous great grieve groneth in my
 spright,
 Whiles thus I heare you of your sorrowes
 treat. ³⁵⁵
 But, woefull Lady, let me you intrete,
 For to unfold the anguish of your hart:
 Mishaps are maistred by advice discrete,
 And counsell mitigates the greatest smart:
 Found never help who never would his hurts
 impart." ³⁶⁰

41

"O, but," (quoth she) "great grieve will not
 be tould,
 And can more easily be thought then said."
 "Right so," (quoth he) "but he that never
 would
 Could never: will to might gives greatest
 aid."
 "But grieve," (quoth she) "does greater grow
 displaid, ³⁶⁵
 If then it find not helpe, and breeds despaire."
 "Despaire breeds not," (quoth he) "where
 faith is staid."
 "No faith so fast," (quoth she) "but flesh
 does paire." ¹
 "Flesh may empaire," (quoth he) "but rea-
 son can repaire." ³⁶⁹

42

His goodly reason, and well-guided speach,
 So deepe did settle in her gracious thought,
 That her perswaded to disclose the breach
 Which love and fortune in her heart had
 wrought;
 And said; "Faire Sir, I hope good hap hath
 brought
 You to inquire the secrets of my grieve, ³⁷⁵
 Or that your wisdom will direct my
 thought,
 Or that your prowesse can me yield reliefe:
 Then, heare the story sad, which I shall tell
 you brieve.

43

"The forlorne Maiden, whom your eies
 have seene ³⁷⁹
 The laughing stocke of fortunes mockeries,
 Am th' onely daughter of a King and Queene,
 Whose parents deare, whiles equal destinies
 Did ronne about, and their felicities
 The favourable heavens did not envy,

1 impair.

Did spred their rule through all the territories,³⁸⁵
Which Phison¹ and Euphrates floweth by,
And Gehons golden waves doe wash continually:

44

"Till that their cruell cursed enemy,
An huge great Dragon, horrible in sight,
Bred in the loathly lakes of Tartary,³⁹⁰
With murdrous ravine, and devouring might,
Their kingdome spoild, and countrey wasted
quight:

Themselves, for feare into his jawes to fall,
He first to castle strong to take their flight;
Where, fast embard in mighty brasen
wall,³⁹⁵
He has them now fowr years besiegd to make
them thrall.

45

"Full many knights, adventurous and
stout,
Have enterpriz'd that Monster to subdew.
From every coast that heaven walks about
Have thither come the noble Martial
crew⁴⁰⁰

That famous harde atchievements still pursue;
Yet never any could that girlond win,
But all still shronke, and still he greater
grew:

All they, for want of faith, or guilt of sin,
The pitteous pray of his fiers cruelty have
bin.⁴⁰⁵

46

"At last, yled with far reported praise,
Which flying fame throughout the world had
spred,
Of doughty knights, whom Faery land did
raise,

That noble order hight of maidenhed,
Forthwith to court of Gloriane I sped,⁴¹⁰
Of Gloriane, great Queene of glory bright,
Whose kingdomes seat Cleopolis³ is red;⁴
There to obtaine some such redoubted
knight,
That Parents deare from tyrants powre deliver might.

47

"Yt was my chaunce (my chaunce was
faire and good)⁴¹⁵
There for to find a fresh unproved knight;

Whose manly hands imbrewd in guilty blood
Had never beene, ne ever by his might
Had throwne to ground the unregarded
right:

Yet of his prowesse prooffe he since hath
made⁴²⁰

(I witnes am) in many a cruell fight;
The groning ghosts of many one dismaide
Have felt the bitter dint of his avenging
blade.

48

"And ye, the forlorne reliques of his powre,
His biting sword, and his devouring speare,
Which have endured many a dreadfull
stowre,⁴²⁶

Can speake his prowesse that did earst you
beare,

And well could rule; now he hath left you
heare

To be the record of his ruefull losse,
And of my dolefull disaventurous deare.⁴³⁰
O! heavie record of the good Redcrosse,
Where have yee left your lord that could so
well you tosse?

49

"Well hoped I, and faire beginnings had,
That he my captive languor should redeeme:
Till, all unweeting, an Enchaunter bad⁴³⁵
His sence abusd, and made him to mis-
deeme

My loyalty, not such as it did seeme,
That rather death desire then such despight.²
Be judge, ye heavens, that all things right
esteeme,

How I him lov'd, and love with all my
might.⁴⁴⁰

So thought I eke of him, and think I thought
aright.

50

"Thenceforth me desolate he quite for-
sooke,

To wander where wilde fortune would me
lead,

And other bywaies he himselfe betooke,
Where never foote of living wight did
tread,⁴⁴⁵

That brought not backe the balefull body
dead:

In which him chaunced false Duessa meete,
Mine onely³ foe, mine onely deadly dread;
Who with her witchcraft, and misseeming
sweete,

Inveigled him to follow her desires un-
meete.⁴⁵⁰

¹ The three rivers mentioned are in Paradise.

² Hades.

³ "The city of glory"; i.e., London. ⁴ called.

¹ injury.

² wrong.

³ particular.

51

"At last, by subtile sleights she him be-
traid

Unto his foe, a Gyaunt huge and tall;
Who him disarmed, dissolute, dismaid,
Unwares surprised, and with mighty mall¹
The monster merclesse him made to fall, ⁴⁵⁵
Whose fall did never foe before behold:
And now in darkesome dungeon, wretched
thrall,
Remedlesse for aie he doth him hold.
This is my cause of grieve, more great then
may be told."

52

Ere she had ended all she gan to faint: ⁴⁶⁰
But he her comforted, and faire bespake:
"Certes, Madame, ye have great cause of
plaint;
That stoutest heart, I weene, could cause to
quake:
But be of cheare, and comfort to you take;
For till I have acquitt your captive knight,
Assure your selfe I will you not forsake." ⁴⁶⁶
His chearefull words reviv'd her chearelesse
spright,
So forth they went, the Dwarfe them guiding
ever right.

CANTO VIII

Faire virgin, to redeeme her deare,
Brings Arthure to the fight:
Who slayes the Gyaunt, wounds the beast,
And strips Duessa quight.

I

Ay me! how many perils doe enfold
The righteous man, to make him daily fall,
Were not that heavenly grace doth him up-
hold,
And stedfast truth acquite him out of all.
Her love is firme, her care continuall, ⁵
So oft as he, through his own foolish pride
Or weaknes, is to sinfull bands made thrall:
Els should this Redcrosse knight in bands
have dyde,
For whose deliverance she this Prince doth
thither guyd.

2

They sadly traveild thus, untill they
came ¹⁰
Nigh to a castle builded strong and hye:
Then cryde the Dwarfe, "Lo! yonder is the
same,
In which my Lord, my liege, doth lucklesse ly
Thrall to that Gyaunts hatefull tyranny:

I clab.

Therefore, deare Sir, your mightie powres
assay."

15

The noble knight alighted by and by
From loftie steed, and badd the Ladie stay,
To see what end of fight should him befall
that day.

3

So with his Squire, th' admirer of his might,
He marched forth towards that castle
wall, ²⁰
Whose gates he fownd fast shutt, ne living
wight
To warde the same, nor answere commers
call.
Then tooke that Squire an horne of bugle¹
small,
Which hong adowne his side in twisted gold
And tasselles gay. Wyde wonders over
all ²⁵
Of that same hornes great virtues weren told,
Which had approved bene in uses manifold.

4

Was never wight that heard that shrilling
sownd,
But trembling feare did feel in every vaine:
Three miles it might be easy heard arownd, ³⁰
And Ecchoes three aunswer'd it selfe againe:
No false enchauntment, nor deceitfull
traîne,
Might once abide the terror of that blast,
But presently was void and wholly vaine:
No gate so strong, no locke so firme and
fast, ³⁵
But with that percing noise flew open quite,
or brast.

5

The same before the Geaunts gate he blew,
That all the castle quaked from the grownd,
And every dore of freewill open flew.
The Gyaunt selfe, dismaied with that
sownd, ⁴⁰
Where he with his Duessa dalliaunce fownd,
In hast came rushing forth from inner bowre,
With staring countenance sterne, as one
astownd,
And staggering steps, to weet what suddein
stowre
Had wrought that horror strange, and dar'd
his dreaded powre. ⁴⁵

6

And after him the proud Duessa came,
High mounted on her many headed beast,
And every head with fyrie tongue did flame,

I ox.

And every head was crowned on his creast,
And bloody mouthed with late cruell feast. 50
That when the knight beheld, his mightie
shild

Upon his manly arme he soone addrest,
And at him fiersly flew, with corage fild,
And eger greedinesse through every member
thrild.

7

Therewith the Gyant buckled him to
fight, 55
Inflam'd with scornfull wrath and high dis-
daine,

And lifting up his dreadfull club on hight,
All arm'd with ragged snubbes¹ and knottie
graine,

Him thought at first encounter to have slaine.
But wise and wary was that noble Pere; 60
And, lightly leaping from so monstrous
maine,

Did fayre avoide the violence him nere:
It booted nought to thinke such thunderbolts
to beare.

8

Ne shame he thought to shonne so hideous
might:

The ydle stroke, enforcing furious way, 65
Missing the marke of his misaymed sight,
Did fall to ground, and with his heavy sway
So deeply dinted in the driven clay,
That three yardes deepe a furrow up did
throw.

The sad earth, wounded with so sore assay, 70
Did grone full grievous underneath the blow,
And trembling with strange feare did like an
erthquake show.

9

As when almightie Jove, in wrathfull mood,
To wreake the guilt of mortall sins is bent,
Hurles forth his thundring dart with deadly
food² 75

Enrold in flames, and smouldring dreriment,
Through riven cloudes and molten firmament;
The fiers threeforked engin, making way,
Both loftie towres and highest trees hath
rent,

And all that might his angry passage stay; 80
And, shooting in the earth, castes up a mount
of clay.

10

His boystrous³ club, so buried in the
grownd,

He could not rearen up againe so light,

1 knobs.

2 feud.

3 crude.

But that the Knight him at advantage
fownd;

And, whiles he strove his combred clubbe to
quight 85

Out of the earth, with blade all burning
bright

He smott off his left arme, which like a
block

Did fall to ground, depriv'd of native might:
Large streames of blood out of the truncked
stock

Forth gushed, like fresh water streame from
riven rocke. 90

11

Dismayed with so desperate deadly wound,
And eke impatient of unwonted payne,
He loudly brayd with beastly yelling sownd,
That all the fieldes rebellowed againe.

As great a noyse, as when in Cymbrian
plaine 95

An heard of Bulles, whom kindly¹ rage doth
sting,

Doe for the milky mothers want complaine,
And fill the fieldes with troublous bellowing:
The neighbor woods arownd with hollow
murmur ring.

12

That when his deare Duessa heard, and
saw 100

The evil stownd that daungerd her estate,
Unto his aide she hastily did draw
Her dreadfull beast; who, swolne with blood
of late,

Came ramping forth with proud presumpte-
ous gate,

And threatned all his heades like flaming
brandes. 105

But him the Squire made quickly to retrate,
Encountring fiers with single sword in hand;
And twixt him and his Lord did like a bul-
warke stand.

13

The proud Duessa, full of wrathfull spight,
And fiers disdaine to be affronted so, 110

Enforst her purple beast with all her might,
That stop out of the way to overthroe,

Scorning the let of so unequall foe:

But nathemore would that corageous swayne
To her yeeld passage gainst his Lord to
goe, 115

But with outrageous strokes did him re-
straine,

And with his body bard the way atwixt them
twaine.

1 natural.

14

Then tooke the angrie witch her golden cup,
Which still she bore, replete with magick
arteres;
Death and despayre did many thereof
sup, ¹²⁰
And secret poyson through their inner partes,
Th' eternall bale of heauie wounded harts;
Which, after charmes and some enchaunt-
ments said,
She lightly sprinkled on his weaker partes:
Therewith his sturdie corage soon was
quayd,¹ ¹²⁵
And all his sences were with suddein dread
dismayd.

15

So downe he fell before the cruell beast,
Who on his neck his bloody clawes did seize,
That life nigh crusht out of his panting brest:
No powre he had to stirre, nor will to rize. ¹³⁰
That when the carefull knight gan well auise,
He lightly left the foe with whom he fought,
And to the beast gan turne his enterprise;
For wondrous anguish in his hart it wrought,
To see his loved Squyre into such thraldom
brought: ¹³⁵

16

And, high aduancing his blood-thirstie
blade,
Stroke one of those deformed heades so sore,
That of his puissaunce proud ensample made:
His monstrous scalpe downe to his teeth it
tore,
And that misformed shape misshaped
more. ¹⁴⁰
A sea of blood gusht from the gaping wownd,
That her gay garments staynd with filthy gore,
And overflowed all the field arownd,
That over shoes in blood he waded on the
grownd.

17

Thereat he rored for exceeding paine, ¹⁴⁵
That to have heard great horror would have
bred;
And scourging th' emptie ayre with his long
trayne,
Through great impatience of his grieved hed,
His gorgeous ryder from her loftie sted
Would have cast downe, and trodd in durty
myre, ¹⁵⁰
Had not the Gyaunt soone her succoured;
Who, all enrag'd with smart and frantick yre;
Came hurtling in full fiers, and forst the
knight retyre.

1 subdued.

18

The force, which wont in two to be dis-
perst,
In one alone left hand he now unites, ¹⁵⁵
Which is through rage more strong then both
were erst;
With which his hideous club aloft he dites,¹
And at his foe with furious rigor smites,
That strongest Oake might seeme to over-
throw.
The stroke upon his shield so heauie lites, ¹⁶⁰
That to the ground it doubleth him full low:
What mortall wight could ever beare so
monstrous blow?

19

And in his fall his shield, that covered was,
Did loose his vele² by chaunce, and open
flew;
The light whereof, that heuens light did
pas, ¹⁶⁵
Such blazing brightnesse through the ayre
threw,
That eye mote not the same endure to vew.
Which when the Gyaunt spyde with staring
eye,
He downe let fall his arme, and soft withdrew
His weapon huge, that heaved was on hye ¹⁷⁰
For to have slain the man, that on the ground
did lye.

20

And eke the fruitfull-headed³ beast, amazd
At flashing beames of that sunshiny shield,
Became stark blind, and all his sences dazd,
That downe he tumbled on the durtie
field, ¹⁷⁵
And seemd himselfe as conquered to yield.
Whom when his maistresse proud perceiv'd
to fall,
Whiles yet his feeble feet for faintnesse reeld,
Unto the Gyaunt lowdly she gan call;
"O! helpe, Orgoglio; helpe! or els we perish
all." ¹⁸⁰

21

At her so pitteous cry was much amoo'v'd
Her champion stout; and for to ayde his
frend,
Again he wonted angry weapon proov'd,
But all in vaine, for he has redd his end
In that bright shield, and all their forces
spend ¹⁸⁵
Themselues in vaine: for, since that glaunc-
ing sight,
He hath no powre to hurt, nor to defend.

1 lifts.

2 its cover.

3 bounteously supplied with heads.

As where th' Almighties lightning brond does
light,
It dimmes the dazed eyen, and daunts the
sences quight.

22

Whom when the Prince, to batteill new
address ¹⁹⁰
And threatning high his dreadfull stroke, did
see,

His sparkling blade about his head he blest,
And smote off quite his right leg by the knee,
That downe he tumbled; as an aged tree,
High growing on the top of rocky clift, ¹⁹⁵
Whose hartstrings with keene steele nigh
hewen be;

The mightie trunck, halfe rent with ragged
rift,

Doth roll adowne the rocks, and fall with
fearefull drift.

23

Or as a Castle, reared high and round,
By subtile engins and malicious slight ²⁰⁰
Is undermined from the lowest ground,
And her foundation forst, and feebled quight,
At last downe falles; and with her heaped
hight

Her hastie ruine does more heavie make,
And yields it selfe unto the victours
might. ²⁰⁵

Such was this Gyaunts fall, that seemd to
shake

The stedfast globe of earth, as it for feare did
quake.

24

The knight, then lightly leaping to the pray,
With mortall steele him smot againe so sore,
That headlesse his unweldy bodie lay, ²¹⁰
All wallowd in his owne fowle bloody gore,
Which flowed from his wounds in wondrous
store.

But, soone as breath out of his brest did pas,
That huge great body, which the Gyaunt
bore,

Was vanisht quite; and of that monstrous
mas ²¹⁵

Was nothing left, but like an emptie blader
was.

25

Whose grievous fall when false Duessa
spyde,

Her golden cup she cast unto the ground,
And crowned mitre rudely threw asyde:
Such percing grieve her stubborne hart did
wound, ²²⁰

That she could not endure that dolefull
stound

But leaving all behind her fled away:
The light-foot Squyre her quickly turnd
around,

And, by hard meanes enforcing her to stay,
So brought unto his Lord as his deserved
pray. ²²⁵

26

The roiall Virgin which beheld from farre,
In pensive plight and sad perplexitie,
The whole atchievement of this doubtfull
warre,

Came running fast to greet his victorie,
With sober gladnesse and myld modestie; ²³⁰
And with sweet joyous cheare him thus be-
spake:

"Fayre braunch of noblesse, flowre of chev-
alrie,

That with your worth the world amazed
make,

How shall I quite the paynes ye suffer for my
sake?

27

"And you, fresh budd of vertue springing
fast, ²³⁵

Whom these sad eyes saw nigh unto deaths
dore,

What hath poore Virgin for such perill past
Wherewith you to reward? Accept therefore
My simple selfe, and service evermore:

And he that high does sit, and all things
see ²⁴⁰

With equall eye, their merites to restore,
Behold what ye this day have done for mee,
And what I cannot quite requite with usree.

28

"But sith the heavens, and your faire
handeling,

Have made you master of the field this
day, ²⁴⁵

Your fortune maister eke with governing,
And, well begonne, end all so well, I pray!

Ne let that wicked woman scape away;
For she it is, that did my Lord bethrall,

My dearest Lord, and deepe in dongeon
lay, ²⁵⁰

Where he his better dayes hath wasted all:
O heare, how piteous he to you for ayd does
call!"

29

Forthwith he gave in charge unto his
Squyre,
That scarlot whore to keepeen carefully;

Whyles he himselfe with greedie great de-
 syre 255
 Into the Castle entred forcibly,
 Where living creature none he did espye,
 Then gan he lowdly through the house to call,
 But no man car'd to answere to his crye:
 There raignd a solemne silence over all; 260
 Nor voice was heard, nor wight was seene in
 bowre or hall.

30

At last, with creeping crooked pace forth
 came
 An old old man,¹ with beard as white as snow,
 That on a staffe his feeble steps did frame,
 And guyde his wearie gate both too and
 fro, 265
 For his eye sight him fayled long ygo;
 And on his arme a bounch of keyes he bore,
 The which unused rust did overgrow:
 Those were the keyes of every inner dore;
 But he could not them use, but kept them
 still in store. 270

31

But very uncouth sight was to behold,
 How he did fashion his untoward pace;
 For as he forward moovd his footing old,
 So backward still was turnd his wrinckled
 face:
 Unlike to men, who ever, as they trace, 275
 Both feet and face one way are wont to lead.
 This was the auncient keeper of that place,
 And foster father of the Gyaunt dead;
 His name Ignaro did his nature right aread.

32

His reverend heares and holy gravitee 280
 The knight much honord, as beseemed well;
 And gently askt, where all the people bee,
 Which in that stately building wont to dwell:
 Who answard him full soft, *he could not tell*.
 Again he askt, where that same knight was
 layd, 285
 Whom great Orgoglio with his puissaunce fell
 Had made his caytive thrall: againe he sayde,
He could not tell; ne ever other answere made.

33

Then asked he, which way he in might pas?
He could not tell; againe he answered. 290
 Thereat the courteous knight displeased was,
 And said; "Old syre, it seemes thou hast not
 red²
 How ill it sits with that same silver hed,
 In vaine to mocke, or mockt in vaine to bee:
 But if thou be, as thou art pourtrahed 295

1 Ignorance. 2 observed.

With natures pen, in ages grave degree,
 Aread in graver wise what I demaund of
 thee."

34

His answere likewise was, *he could not tell*:
 Whose sencelesse speach, and doted igno-
 rance,
 Whenas the noble Prince had marked
 well, 300
 He ghest his nature by his countenance,
 And calmd his wrath with goodly temper-
 ance.
 Then, to him stepping, from his arme did
 reach
 Those keyes, and made himselfe free enter-
 ance.
 Each dore he opened without any breach, 305
 There was no barre to stop, nor foe him to
 empeach.

35

There all within full rich arayd he found,
 With royall arras, and resplendent gold,
 And did with store of every thing abound,
 That greatest Princes presence might be-
 hold. 310
 But all the floore (too filthy to be told)
 With blood of guiltlesse babes, and innocents
 trew,
 Which there were slaine as sheepe out of the
 fold,
 Defiled was, that dreadfull was to vew;
 And sacred ashes over it was strowed
 new. 315

36

And there beside of marble stone was built
 An Altare, carv'd with cunning ymagery,
 On which trew Christians blood was often
 spilt,
 And holy Martyres often doen to dye
 With cruell malice and strong tyranny: 320
 Whose blessed sprites, from underneath the
 stone,
 To God for vengeance cryde continually;
 And with great grieve were often heard to
 grone,
 That hardest heart would bleede to hear their
 piteous mone.

37

Through every rowme he sought, and
 everie bowr, 325
 But no where could he find that wofull thrall:
 At last he came unto an yron doore,
 That fast was lockt, but key found not at all
 Emongst that bounch to open it withall;

But in the same a little grate was pight, ³³⁰
Through which he sent his voyce, and lowd
did call

With all his powre, to weet if living wight
Were housed therewithin, whom he enlargen
might.

38

Therewith an hollow, dreary, murmuring
voyce
These pitteous plaintes and dolours did
resound: ³³⁵

"O! who is that, which brings me happy
choyce

Of death, that here lye dying every stound,
Yet live performe in balefull darkenesse bound?
For now three Moones have changed thrice
their hew,¹

And have been thrice hid underneath the
ground, ³⁴⁰

Since I the heavens chearefull face did vew.
O! welcome thou, that doest of death bring
tydings trew."

39

Which when that Champion heard, with
percing point

Of pittie deare his hart was thrilled sore;
And trembling horror ran through every
joynt, ³⁴⁵

For ruth of gentle knight so fowle forlore;
Which shaking off, he rent that yron dore
With furious force and indignation fell;

Where entred in, his foot could find no flore,
But all a deepe descent, as darke as hell, ³⁵⁰
That breathed ever forth a filthie banefull
smell.

40

But nether darkenesse fowle, nor filthy
bands,

Nor noyous smell, his purpose could withhold,
(Entire affection hateth nicer hands)

But that with constant zeale and corage
bold, ³⁵⁵

After long paines and labors manifold,
He found the meanes that Prisoner up to
reare;

Whose feeble thighes, unable to uphold
His pined corse, him scarce to light could
beare;

A ruefull spectacle of death and ghastly
drere. ³⁶⁰

41

His sad dull eies, deepe sunck in hollow pits,
Could not endure th' unwonted sunne to view;

1 form.

His bare thin cheekes for want of better bits,²
And empty sides deceived of their dew,
Could make a stony hart his hap to rew; ³⁶⁵
His rawbone armes, whose mighty brawned
bowrs ²

Were wont to rive ³ steele plates, and helmets
hew,

Were cleene consum'd; and all his vitall
powres

Decayd, and al his flesh shronk up like with-
ered flowres.

42

Whome when his Lady saw, to him she
ran ³⁷⁰

With hasty joy: to see him made her glad,
And sad to view his visage pale and wan,
Who earst in flowres of freshest youth was
clad.

Tho, when her well of teares she wasted had,
She said; "Ah dearest Lord! what evill
starre ³⁷⁵

On you hath frownd, and pourd his influence
bad,

That of your selfe ye thus berobbed arre,
And this misseeming hew your manly looks
doth marre?"

43

"But welcome now, my Lord in wele or woe,
Whose presence I have lackt too long a
day: ³⁸⁰

And fie on Fortune, mine avowed foe,
Whose wrathful wreakes ⁴ them selves doe
now alay;

And for these wronges shall treble penaunce
pay

Of treble good: good growes of evils priefe." ⁵
The chearelesse man, whom sorrow did dis-
may, ³⁸⁵

Had no delight to treaten of his grieve;
His long endured famine needed more reliefe.

44

"Faire Lady," then said that victorious
knight,

The things, that grievous were to doe, or
beare,

Them to renew, I wote, breeds no delight; ³⁹⁰
Best musicke breeds delight in loathing eare,
But th' only good that growes of passed feare
Is to be wise, and ware of like again.

This daies ensample hath this lesson deare
Deepe written in my heart with yron pen, ³⁹⁵
That blisse may not abide in state of mortall
men.

1 bites, food.
4 punishments.2 muscles.
5 experience.

3 split.

45

"Henceforth, Sir knight, take to you
wonted strength,
And maister these mishaps with patient
might.
Loe! where your foe lies strecht in monstrous
length;
And loe! that wicked woman in your
sight,
The roote of all your care and wretched
plight,
Now in your powre, to let her live, or die."
"To doe her die," (quoth Una) "were
despight,
And shame t' avenge so weake an enemy;
But spoile her of her scarlot robe, and let her
fly." 400 405

46

So, as she bad, that witch they disaraid,
And robd of roiall robes, and purple pall,
And ornaments that richly were displaid;
Ne spared they to strip her naked all.
Then, when they had despoild her tire and
call,⁴¹⁰
Such as she was their eies might her behold,
That her misshaped parts did them appall:
A loathly, wrinckled hag, ill favoured, old,
Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not
be told.

47

Her craftie head was altogether bald, 415
And as in hate of honorable eld,
Was overgrowne with scurfe and filthy scald;
Her teeth out of her rotten gummies were feld,
And her sowre breath abominably smeld;
Her dried dugs, like bladders lacking
wind, 420
Hong downe, and filthy matter from them
weld;
Her wrizled skin as rough, as maple rind,
So scabby was, that would have loathd all
womankind.

48

Her neather parts, the shame of all her
kind,
My chaster Muse for shame doth blush to
write; 425
But at her rompe she growing had behind
A foxes taile, with dong all fowly dight;
And eke her feete most monstrous were in
sight;
For one of them was like an Eagles claw,
With griping talaunts armd to greedy
fight, 430

I cap.

The other like a Beares uneven paw:
More ugly shape yet never living creature
saw.

49

Which when the knights beheld amaz
they were,
And wondred at so fowle deformed wight.
"Such then," (said Una,) "as she seemeth
here, 435
Such is the face of falshood: such the sight
Of fowle Duessa, when her borrowed light
Is laid away, and counterfesaunce knowne."
Thus when they had the witch disrobed
quight,
And all her filthy feature open showne, 440
They let her goe at will, and wander waies
unknowne.

50

Shee, flying fast from heavens hated face,
And from the world that her discovered wide,
Fled to the wastfull wildernesses apace,
From living eies her open shame to hide, 445
And lurkt in rocks and caves, long unespide.
But that faire crew of knights, and Una faire,
Did in that castle afterwards abide,
To rest them selves, and weary powres re-
paire;
Where store they fownd of al that dainty was
and rare. 450

CANTO IX

His loves and lignage Arthure tells:
The knights knitt friendly bands:
Sir Trevisan flies f om Despeyre,
Whom Redcros knight withstands.

I

O goodly golden chayne, wherewith yfere¹
The vertues linked are in lovely wize;
And noble mindes of yore allyed were,
In brave poursuitt of chevalrous emprise,
That none did others safety despize, 5
Nor aid envy to him in need that stands;
But friendly each did others praise devise,
How to advaunce with favourable hands,
As this good Prince redeemd the Redcrosse
knight from bands.

2

Who when their powres, empayrd through
labor long, 10
With dew repast they had recured well,
And that weake captive wight now waxed
strong,
Them list no lenger there at leasure dwell,
I together.

But forward fare as their adventures fell:
 But, ere they parted, Una faire besought 15
 That straunger knight his name and nation
 tell;
 Least so great good, as he for her had
 wrought,
 Should die unknown, and buried be in
 thanckles thought.

3

"Faire virgin," (said the Prince,) "yee me
 require
 A thing without the compas of my witt; 20
 For both the lignage, and the certein Sire,
 From which I sprong, from mee are hidden
 yitt
 For all so soone as life did me admitt
 Into this world, and shewed hevens light,
 From mothers pap I taken was unfitt, 25
 And streight deliver'd to a Fary knight,
 To be upbrought in gentle thewes¹ and
 martiall might.

4

"Unto Old Timon he me brought bylive; 2
 Old Timon, who in youthly yeares hath beene
 In warlike feates th' expertest man alive, 30
 And is the wisest now on earth I weene:
 His dwelling is low in a valley greene,
 Under the foot of Rauran mossy hore,
 From whence the river Dee, as silver cleene,
 His tombling billowes rolls with gentle
 rore; 35
 There all my daies he traind mee up in vertu-
 ous lore.

5

"Thither the great magicien Merlin came,
 As was his use, oftentimes to visit me;
 For he had charge my discipline to frame,
 And Tutors nouriture to oversee. 40
 Him oft and oft I askt in privy,
 Of what loines and what lignage I did spring;
 Whose aunswere bad he still assured bee,
 That I was sonne and heire unto a king,
 As time in her just term the truth to light
 should bring." 45

6

"Well worthy impe,"² said then the Lady
 gent,⁴
 "And Pupill fitt for such a Tutors hand!
 But what adventure, or what high intent,
 Hath brought you hither into Faery land,
 Aread, Prince Arthure, crowne of Martiall
 band?" 50

¹ habits.
³ offspring, child.

² immediately.
⁴ gentle.

"Full hard it is," (quoth he) "to read aright
 The course of heavenly cause, or understand
 The secret meaning of th' eternall might,
 That rules mens waies, and rules the thoughts
 of living might.

7

"For whether he, through fatal deepe fore-
 sight, 55
 Me hither sent for cause to me unghost;
 Or that fresh bleeding wound, which day and
 night
 Whilome doth rangle in my riven brest,
 With forced fury following his behest,
 Me hither brought by wayes yet never
 found, 60
 You to have helpt I hold my selfe yet blest."
 "Ah! courteous Knight," (quoth she) "what
 secret wound
 Could ever find to grieve the gentlest hart on
 ground?"

8

"Dear Dame," (quoth he) "you sleeping
 sparkes awake,
 Which, troubled once, into huge flames will
 grow; 65
 Ne ever will their fervent fury slake,
 Till living moysture into smoke do flow,
 And wasted life doe lye in ashes low:
 Yet sithens silence lesseneth not my fire,
 But, told, it flames; and, hidden, it does
 glow, 70
 I will revele what ye so much desire.
 Ah. Love! lay down thy bow, the whiles I
 may respyre.

9

"It was in freshest flowre of youthly
 yeares,
 When corage first does creepe in manly chest,
 Then first the cole of kindly heat appears 75
 To kindle love in every living brest:
 But me had warnd old Timons wise behest,
 Those creeping flames by reason to subdew,
 Before their rage grew to so great unrest,
 As miserable lovers use to rew, 80
 Which still wex old in woe, whiles wo stil
 wexeth new.

10

"That ydle name of love, and lovers life,
 As losse of time, and vertues enemy,
 I ever scornd, and joyd to stirre up strife,
 In midst of their mournfull Tragedy; 85
 Ay wont to laugh when them I heard to cry,
 And blow the fire which them to ashes brent:
 Their God himselfe, grievd at my libertie,

Shott many a dart at me with fiers intent;
But I them warded all with wary govern-
ment.

90

11

"But all in vaine: no fort can be so strong,
Ne fleshly brest can armed be so sownd,
But will at last be wonne with battrie long,
Or unawares at disavantage fownd.
Nothing is sure that growes on earthly
grownd;
And who most trustes in arme of fleshly
might,
And boastes in beauties chaine not to be
bownd,
Doth soonest fall in disaventrous fight,
And yeeldes his caytive neck to victours
most despight.

12

"Ensample make of him your haplesse
joy,
And of my selfe now mated,¹ as ye see;
Whose prouder vaunt that proud avenging
boy
Did soone pluck downe, and curbd my lib-
ertee.
For on a day, prickt forth with jollitee
Of looser life and heat of hardiment,
Raunging the forest wide on courser free,
The fields, the floods, the heavens, with one
consent,
Did seeme to laugh on me, and favour mine
intent.

13

"Forweariad with my sportes, I did alight
From loftie steed, and downe to sleepe me
layd,
The verdant gras my couch did goodly dight,
And pillow was my helmet fayre displayd;
Whiles every sence the humour sweet em-
bayd,²
And slombring soft my hart did steale away,
Me seemed, by my side a royall Mayd
Her daintie limbes full softly down did lay:
So fayre a creature yet saw never sunny day.

14

"Most goodly glee and lovely blandish-
ment
She to me made, and badd me love her deare;
For dearely sure her love was to me bent,
As, when just time expired, should appeare.
But whether dreames delude, or true it were,
Was never hart so ravisht with delight,
Ne living man like wordes did ever heare,

1 defeated.

2 pervaded.

As she to me delivered all that night;
And at her parting said, She Queene of
Faeries hight.

125

15

"When I awoke, and found her place de-
voyd,
And nought but pressed gras where she had
lyen,
I sorrowed all so much as earst I joyd,
And washed all her place with watry
eyen.
From that day forth I lov'd that face divyne;
From that day forth I cast in carefull mynd,
To seek her out with labor and long tyne,¹
And never vowd to rest till her I fynd:
Nyne monethes I seek in vain, yet nill that
vow unbynd."

135

16

Thus as he spake, his visage wexed pale,
And change of hew great passion did be-
wray;
Yett still he strove to cloke his inward bale,
And hide the smoke that did his fire display,
Till gentle Una thus to him gan say:
"O happy Queene of Faeries! that hast fownd,
Mongst many, one that with his prowessse
may
Defend thine honour, and thy foes confownd.
True loves are often sown, but seldom grow
on grownd."

17

"Thine, O! then," said the gentle Redcrosse
knight,
"Next to that Ladies love, shalbe the place,
O fayrest virgin! full of heavenly light,
Whose wondrous faith, exceeding earthly
race,
Was firmest fixt in myne extremest case.
And you, my Lord, the Patrone of my
life,
Of that great Queene may well gaine worthie
grace,
For onely worthie you through prowes priefe,
Yf living man mote worthie be to be her
life."²

145

150

18

So diversly discoursing of their loves,
The golden Sunne his glistring head gan
shew,
And sad remembraunce now the Prince
amoves
With fresh desire his voyage to pursew;
Als Una earnd her travaill to renew.

155

1 toll.

2 beloved.

Then those two knights, fast friendship for
to bynd,
And love establish each to other trew, 160
Gave goodly gifts, the signes of gratefull
mynd,
And eke, as pledges firme, right hands to-
gether joynd.

19

Prince Arthur gave a boxe of Diamond
sure,
Embowd with gold and gorgeous ornament,
Wherein were closd few drops of liquor
pure, 165
Of wondrous worth, and vertue excellent,
That any wovnd could heale incontinent.
Which to requite, the Redcrosse knight him
gave
A booke, wherein his Saveours testament
Was writt with golden letters rich and
brave: 170
A worke of wondrous grace, and hable soules
to save.

20

Thus beene they parted; Arthur on his way
To seeke his love, and th' other for to fight
With Unaes foe, that all her realme did
pray.¹
But she, now weighing the decayed plight 175
And shrunkn synewes of her chosen knight,
Would not a while her forward course pur-
sew,
Ne bring him forth in face of dreadfull fight,
Till he recovered had his former hew;
For him to be yet weake and wearie well she
knew. 180

21

So as they traveild, lo! they gan espy
An armed knight towards them gallop fast,
That seemed from some feared foe to fly,
Or other griesly thing that him aghast.
Still as he fledd his eye was backward
cast, 185
As if his feare still followed him behynd:
Als flew his steed as he his bandes had brast,
And with his winged heeles did tread the
wynd,
As he had beene a fole of Pegasus his kynd.

22

Nigh as he drew, they might perceive his
head 190
To bee unarmd, and curld uncombed heares
Upstaring stiffe, dismaid with uncouth dread:
Nor drop of blood in all his face appears,

¹ prey on.

Nor life in limbe; and, to increase his feares,
In fowle reproch of knighthoodes fayre de-
gree, 195
About his neck an hempen rope he weares,
That with his glistring armes does ill agree,
But he of rope or armes has now no memoree.

23

The Redcrosse knight toward him crossed
fast,
To weet what mister² wight² was so dis-
mayd. 200
There him he findes all sencelesse and aghast,
That of him selfe he seemd to be afayd;
Whom hardly he from flying forward stayd,
Till he these wordes to him deliver might:
"Sir knight, aread who hath ye thus
arayd, 205
And eke from whom make ye this hasty
flight?
For never knight I saw in such misseeming
plight."

24

He answerd nought at all; but adding new
Feare to his first amazment, staring wyde
With stony eyes and hartlesse hollow
hew, 210
Astonisht stood, as one that had aspyde
Infernall furies with their chaines untyde.
Him yett againe, and yett againe, bespake
The gentle knight; who nought to him re-
plyde;
But, trembling every joynt, did inly
quake, 215
And foltring tongue, at last, these words
seemd forth to shake;

25

"For Gods deare love, Sir knight, doe me
not stay;
For loe! he comes, he comes fast after mee."
Eft³ looking back would faine have runne
away;
But he him forst to stay, and tellen free 220
The secrete cause of his perplexitie:
Yett nathe more by his bold hartie speach
Could his blood frozen hart emboldened bee,
But through his boldnes rather feare did
reach;
Yett, forst, at last he made through silence
sudden breach. 225

26

"And am I now in safetie sure," (quoth he)
"From him that would have forced me to
dye?"

¹ sort of.² person.³ again.

And is the point of death now turnd fro
mee,
That I may tell this haplesse history?"
"Fear nought," (quoth he) "no daunger now
is nye."²³⁰
"Then shall I you recount a ruefull cace,"
(Said he) "the which with this unlucky eye
I late beheld; and, had not greater grace
Me reft from it, had bene partaker of the
place.

27

"I lately chaunst (Would I had never
chaunst!)"²³⁵
With a fayre knight to keepeen companee,
Sir Terwin hight, that well himselfe advaunst
In all affayres, and was both bold and free,
But not so happy as mote happy bee:
He lov'd, as was his lot, a Lady gent,²⁴⁰
That him againe lov'd in the least degree;
For she was proud, and of too high intent,
And joyd to see her lover languish and
lament:

28

"From whom retourning sad and comfort-
lesse,
As on the way together we did fare,²⁴⁵
We met that villen, (God from him me
blesse!)"¹
That cursed wight, from whom I scapt why-
leare,²
A man of hell that calls himselfe Despayre:
Who first us greets, and after fayre areedes³
Of tydinges straunge, and of adventures
rare:²⁵⁰
So creeping close, as Snake in hidden weedes,
Inquireth of our states, and of our knightly
deedes.

29

"Which when he knew, and felt our feeble
harts
Embost⁴ with bale, and bitter byting griebe,
Which love had launched with his deadly
darts,²⁵⁵
With wounding words, and termes of foule
repriebe,
He pluckt from us all hope of dew reliefe,
That earst us held in love of lingring life;
Then hopelesse, hartlesse, gan the cunning
thiefe
Perswade us dye, to stint all further
strife:²⁶⁰
To me he lent this rope, to him a rusty
knife.

1 protect.
3 proclaims, tells.

2 some time before.
4 worn out.

³⁰
"With which sad instrument of hasty
death,
That wofull lover, loathing lenger light,
A wyde way made to let forth living breath:
But I, more fearefull or more lucky
wight,²⁶⁵
Dismayd with that deformed dismall sight,
Fledd fast away, halfe dead with dying
feare;
Ne yet assur'd of life by you, Sir knight,
Whose like infirmity like chaunce may beare;
But God you never let his charmed speeches
heare!"²⁷⁰

31

"How may a man," (said he) "with idle
speach
Be wonne to spoyle the Castle of his health?"
"I wote," (quoth he) "whom tryall late did
teach,
That like would not for all this worldes
wealth.
His subtile tong like dropping honny
mealt'h"²⁷⁵
Into the heart, and searcheth every vaine;
That, ere one be aware, by secret stealth
His powre is reft, and weaknes doth remaine.
O! never, Sir, desire to try his guilefull
traine."

32

"Certes," (sayd he) "hence¹ shall I never
rest,²⁸⁰
Till I that treachours art have heard and
tryde:
And you, Sir knight, whose name mote I
request,
Of grace do me unto his cabin guyde."
"I, that hight Trevisan," (quoth he) "will
ryde
Against my liking backe to doe you grace:²⁸⁵
But nor for gold nor glee will I abyde
By you, when ye arrive in that same place;
For lever² had I die then see his deadly
face."

33

Ere long they come where that same wicked
wight
His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave,²⁹⁰
For underneath a craggy cliff ypight,
Darke, dolefull, dreary, like a greedy grave,
That still for carrion carcases doth crave:
On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly Owle,
Shrieking his balefull note, which ever
drave²⁹⁵

1 henceforth.

2 sooner.

Far from that haunt all other chearefull
fowle;
And all about it wandering ghostes did wayle
and howle.

34

And all about old stockes and stubs of
trees,
Whereon nor fruit nor leafe was ever seene,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees; ³⁰⁰
On which had many wretches hanged beene,
Whose carcases were scatted on the greene,
And throwne about the cliffs. Arrived there,
That bare-head knight, for dread and dolefull
teene,¹
Would faine have fled, ne durst approchen
neare; ³⁰⁵
But th'other forst him staye, and comforted
in feare.

35

That darkesome cave they enter, where
they find
That cursed man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullen mind:
His griesie lockes, long growen and un-
bound, ³¹⁰
Disordred hong about his shoulders round,
And hid his face, through which his hollow
eyne
Lookt deadly dull, and stared as astound;
His raw-bone cheekes, through penurie and
pine,
Were shronke into his jawes, as he did never
dyne. ³¹⁵

36

His garment, nought but many ragged
clouts,
With thornes together pind and patched
was,
The which his naked sides he wrapt abouts;
And him beside there lay upon the gras
A dreary corse, whose life away did pas, ³²⁰
All wallowd in his own yet luke-warme blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh, alas!
In which a rusty knife fast fixed stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing
flood.

37

Which piteous spectacle, approving
trew ³²⁵
The wofull tale that Trevisan had told,
Whenas the gentle Redcrosse knight did vew,
With firie zeale he burnt in courage bold
Him to avenge before his blood were cold,
¹ grief.

And to the villen sayd; "Thou damned
wight, ³³⁰
The authour of this fact we here behold,
What justice can but judge against thee right,
With thine owne blood to price his blood,
here shed in sight?"

38

"What franticke fit," (quoth he) "hath
thus distraught
Thee, foolish man, so rash a doome to
give? ³³⁵
What justice ever other judgement taught,
But he should dye who merites not to live?
None els to death this man despayring drive
But his owne guiltie mind, deserving death.
Is then unjust to each his dew to give? ³⁴⁰
Or let him dye, that loatheth living breath,
Or let him die at ease, that liveth here un-
eath? ¹

39

"Who travailes by the wearie wandering
way,
To come unto his wished home in haste,
And meetes a flood that doth his passage
stay, ³⁴⁵
Is not great grace to helpe him over past,
Or free his feet that in the myre sticke fast?
Most envious man, that grieves at neighbours
good;
And fond, that joyest in the woe thou hast!
Why wilt not let him passe, that long hath
stood ³⁵⁰
Upon the bancke, yet wilt thy selfe not pas
the flood?"

40

"He there does now enjoy eternall rest
And happy ease, which thou doest want and
crave,
And further from it daily wanderest:
What if some little payne the passage
have, ³⁵⁵
That makes frayle flesh to feare the bitter
wave,
Is not short payne well borne, that bringes
long ease,
And layes the soule to sleepe in quiet grave?
Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life, does
greatly please." ³⁶⁰

41

The knight much wondred at his suddeine
wit,
And sayd; "The terme of life is limited,
¹ with difficulty.

Ne may a man prolong, nor shorten, it:
 The souldier may not move from watchfull
 sted,
 Nor leave his stand untill his Captaine
 bed."³⁶⁵
 "Who life did limit by almightie doome,"
 (Quoth he) "knowes best the termes estab-
 lished;
 And he, that points the Centonell his roome,
 Doth license him depart at sound of morning
 droome."

42

"Is not his deed, what ever thing is
 donne³⁷⁰
 In heaven and earth? Did not he all create
 To die againe? All ends that was begonne:
 Their times in his eternall booke of fate
 Are written sure, and have their certein date.
 Who then can strive with strong neces-
 sitie,³⁷⁵
 That holds the world in his still chaunging
 state,
 Or shunne the death ordaynd by destinie?
 When houre of death is come, let none aske
 whence, nor why.

43

"The lenger life, I wote, the greater sin;
 The greater sin, the greater punishment:³⁸⁰
 All those great battels, which thou boasts to
 win
 Through strife, and blood-shed, and avenge-
 ment,
 Now prayds, hereafter deare thou shalt re-
 pent;
 For life must life, and blood must blood,
 repay,
 Is not enough thy evill life forespent?³⁸⁵
 For he that once hath missed the right
 way,
 The further he doth goe, the further he doth
 stray.

44

"Then doe no further goe, no further
 stray,
 But here ly downe, and to thy rest betake,
 Th' ill to prevent, that life ensewen may;³⁹⁰
 For what hath life that may it loved make,
 And gives not rather cause it to forsake?
 Feare, sicknesse, age, losse, labour, sorrow,
 strife,
 Payne, hunger, cold that makes the hart to
 quake,
 And ever fickle fortune rageth rife;³⁹⁵
 All which, and thousands mo, do make a
 loathsome life.

45

"Thou, wretched man, of death hast great-
 est need,
 If in true ballaunce thou wilt weigh thy state;
 For never knight, that dared warlike deed,
 More luckless dissaventures did amate:⁴⁰⁰
 Witnes the dungeon deepe, wherein of late
 Thy life shutt up for death so oft did call;
 And though good lucke prolonged hath thy
 date,
 Yet death then would the like mishaps fore-
 stall,
 Into the which hereafter thou maist happen
 fall.⁴⁰⁵

46

"Why then doest thou, O man of sin! desire
 To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree?
 Is not the measure of thy sinfull hire
 High heaped up with huge iniquitee,
 Against the day of wrath to burden thee?⁴¹⁰
 Is not enough, that to this Lady mild
 Thou falsed hast thy faith with perjuree,
 And sold thy selfe to serve Duessa vild,
 With whom in al abuse thou hast thy selfe
 defild?

47

"Is not he just, that all this doth behold⁴¹⁵
 From highest heven, and beares an equall eie?
 Shall he thy sins up in his knowledge fold,
 And guilty be of thine impietie?
 Is not his lawe, Let every sinner die;
 Die shall all flesh? What then must needs
 be donne⁴²⁰
 Is it not better to doe willinglie,
 Then linger till the glas be all out ronnee?
 Death is the end of woes: die soone, O faeries
 sonne!"

48

The knight was much enmoved with his
 speach,
 That as a swords poynt through his hart did
 perse,⁴²⁵
 And in his conscience made a secrete breach,
 Well knowing trew all that he did reherse,
 And to his fresh remembraunce did reverse,
 The ugly vew of his deformed crimes;
 That all his manly powres it did disperse,⁴³⁰
 As he were charmed with inchaunted rimes;
 That oftentimes he quakt, and fainted often-
 times.

49

In which amazement when the Miscreaunt
 Perceived him to waver, weake and fraile,
 I dismay.

Whiles trembling horror did his conscience
daunt, 435
And hellish anguish did his soule assaile;
To drive him to despaire, and quite to quaille,
Hee shewd him, painted in a table plaine,
The damned ghosts that doe in torments
waile,
And thousand feends that doe them endlesse
paine 440
With fire and brimstone, which for ever shall
remaine.

50

The sight whereof so thoroughly him dis-
maid,
That nought but death before his eies he
saw,
And ever burning wrath before him laid,
By righteous sentence of th' Almightyes
law. 445
Then gan the villain him to overcraw,¹
And brought unto him swords, ropes, poison,
fire,
And all that might him to perdition draw;
And bad him choose what death he would
desire;
For death was dew to him that had provokt
Gods ire. 450

51

But, whenas none of them he saw him
take,
He to him raught a dagger sharpe and keene,
And gave it him in hand: his hand did quake
And tremble like a leafe of Aspin greene,
And troubled blood through his pale face was
seene 455
To come and goe with tidings from the heart,
As it a ronning messenger had beene.
At last, resolv'd to work his finall smart,
He lifted up his hand, that backe againe did
start.

52

Which whenas Una saw, through every
vaine 460
The crudled cold ran to her well of life,
As in a swowne: but, soone reliv'd againe,
Out of his hand she snatcht the cursed knife,
And threw it to the ground, enraged rife,
And to him said; "Fie, fie, faint hearted
Knight! 465
What meanest thou by this reprochfull strife?
Is this the battaile which thou vauntst to
fight
With that fire-mouthed Dragon, horrible and
bright?

¹ exult over.

53

"Come; come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly
wight,
Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly
hart, 470
Ne divelish thoughts dismay thy constant
spright:
In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part?
Why shouldst thou then despeire, that
chosen art?
Where justice growes, there grows eke greater
grace,
The which doth quench the brond of hellish
smart, 475
And that accurst hand-writing doth deface.
Arise, sir Knight; arise, and leave this cursed
place."

54

So up he rose, and thence amounted
streight.
Which when the carle beheld, and saw his
gust
Would safe depart, for all his subtile
sleight, 480
He chose an halter from among the rest,
And with it hong him selfe, unbid,¹ unblest.
But death he could not worke himselfe
thereby;
For thousand times he so him selfe had drest,²
Yet nathesle it could not doe him die, 485
Till he should die his last, that is, eternally.

CANTO X

Her faithfull knight faire Una brings
To house of Holinesse;
Where he is taught repentaunce, and
The way to heavenly blesse.

1

What man is he, that boasts of fleshly
might
And vaine assuraunce of mortality,
Which, all so soone as it doth come to fight
Against spirituall foes, yields by and by,
Or from the felde most cowardly doth fly! 5
Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
That thorough grace hath gained victory:
If any strength we have, it is to ill,
But all the good is Gods, both power and eke
will.

2

By that which lately hapned Una saw 10
That this her knight was feeble, and too
faint;
And all his sinewes woxen weake and raw,

¹ without prayer.² prepared.

Through long enprisonment, and hard con-
straint,
Which he endured in his late restraint,
That yet he was unfitt for bloody fight. 15
Therefore, to cherish him with diets daint,
She cast to bring him where he chearen might,
Till he recovered had his late decayed plight.

3

There was an auncient house nor far away,
Renowmd throughout the world for sacred
lore 20
And pure unspotted life: so well, they say,
It governd was, and guided evermore,
Through wisdom of a matrone grave and
hore;
Whose onely joy was to relieve the needes
Of wretched soules, and helpe the helpelesse
pore: 25
All night she spent in bidding of her bedes,
And all the day in doing good and godly
deedes.

4

Dame Cælia 1 men did her call, as thought
From heaven to come, or thither to arise;
The mother of three daughters, well up-
brought 30
In goodly thewes, and godly exercise:
The eldest two, most sober, chaste, and wise,
Fidelia 2 and Speranza, 3 virgins were;
Though spoused, yet wanting wedlocks
solemnize;
But faire Charissa 4 to a lovely fere 5 35
Was lincked, and by him had many pledges
dere.

5

Arrived there, the dore they find fast lockt,
For it was warely watched night and day,
For feare of many foes; but, when they
knockt,
The Porter opened unto them streight way. 40
He was an aged syre, all hory gray,
With looks full lowly cast, and gate full
slow,
Wont on a staffe his feeble steps to stay,
Hight Humiltá. They passe in, stouping
low;
For streight and narrow was the way which
he did show. 45

6

Each goodly thing is hardest to begin;
But, entred in, a spatious court they see,
Both plaine and pleasaunt to be walked in;

1 Heavenly.
4 Charity.

2 Faith.
5 companion.

3 Hope.

Where them does meete a francklin 1 faire
and free,
And entertaines with comely courteous
glee; 50
His name was Zele, that him right well became:
For in his speaches and behaveour hee
Did labour lively to expresse the same,
And gladly did them guide, till to the Hall
they came.

7

There fayrely them receives a gentle
Squyre, 55
Of myld demeanure and rare courtesee,
Right cleanly clad in comely sad attyre;
In word and deede that shewd great modestee,
And knew his good 2 to all of each degree,
Hight Reverence. He them with speaches
meet 60
Does faire entreat; no courting nicetee,
But simple, trew, and eke unfained sweet,
As might become a Squyre so great persons
to greet.

8

And afterwarde them to his Dame he
leades,
That aged Dame, the Lady of the place, 65
Who all this while was busy at her beades;
Which doen, she up arose with seemely grace,
And toward them full matronely did pace.
Where, when that fairest Una she beheld,
Whom well she knew to spring from heavenly
race, 70
Her heart with joy unwonted inly sweld,
As feeling wondrous comfort in her weaker
eld: 3

9

And, her embracing, said; "O happy earth,
Whereon thy innocent feet doe ever tread!
Most vertuous virgin, borne of heavenly
berth, 75
That, to redeeme thy woefull parents head
From tyrans rage and ever-dying dread,
Hast wandred through the world now long
a day,
Yett ceassest not thy weary soles to lead;
What grace hath thee now hither brought
this way? 80
Or doen thy feeble feet unweeting hither
stray?

10

"Straunge thing it is an errant knight to see
Here in this place; or any other wight,

1 a man of property.
3 age.

2 "knew how to act."

That hither turnes his steps. So few there
bee,
That chose the narrow path, or seeke the
right: 85
All keepe the broad high way, and take
delight
With many rather for to goe astray,
And be partakers of their evill plight,
Then with a few to walke the rightest way.
O foolish men! why hast ye to your own
decay?" 90

11

"Thy selfe to see, and tyred limbes to
rest,
O matrone sage," (quoth she) "I hither came;
And this good knight his way with me ad-
drest,
Ledd with thy prayes, and broad-blazed
fame,
That up to heaven is blowne." The auncient
Dame 95
Him goodly greeted in her modest guyse,
And enterteynd them both, as best became,
With all the court'sies that she could devyse,
Ne wanted ought to shew her bounteous or
wise.

12

Thus as they gan of sondrie thinges
devise,¹ 100
Loe! two most goodly virgins came in place,
Ylinked arme in arme in lovely wise:
With countenance demure, and modest
grace,
They numbred even steps and equall pace;
Of which the eldest, that Fidelia hight, 105
Like sunny beames threw from her Christall
face
That could have dazd the rash beholders
sight,
And round about her head did shine like
heavens light.

13

She was araied all in lilly white,
And in her right hand bore a cup of gold, 110
With wine and water fild up to the hight,
In which a Serpent did himselfe enfold,
That horror made to all that did behold;
But she no whitt did chaunge her constant
mood:
And in her other hand she fast did hold 115
A booke, that was both signd and seald with
blood;
Wherein darke things were writt, hard to be
understood.

1 talk.

14

Her younger sister, that Speranza hight,
Was clad in blew, that her beseemed well;
Not all so chearefull seemed she of sight, 120
As was her sister; whether dread did dwell
Or anguish in her hart, is hard to tell.
Upon her arme a silver anchor lay,
Whereon she leaned ever, as befell;
And ever up to heaven, as she did pray, 125
Her stedfast eyes were bent, ne swarved other
way.

15

They, seeing Una, towards her gan wend,
Who them encounters with like courtesee;
Many kind speeches they betweene them
spend,
And greatly joy each other for to see: 130
Then to the knight with shamefast modestie
They turne themselves, at Unaes meeke
request,
And him salute with well beseeming glee;
Who faire them quites, as him beseemed best,
And goodly gan discourse of many a noble
quest.¹ 135

16

Then Una thus; "But she, your sister deare,
The deare Charissa, where is she become?
Or wants she health, or busie is elsewhere?"
"Ah! no," said they, "but forth she may not
come;
For she of late is lightned of her wombe, 140
And hath encreast the world with one sonne
more,
That her to see should be but troublesome."
"Indeed," (quoth she) "that should her
trouble sore,
But thankt be God, and her encrease so ever-
more!"

17

Then said the aged Cælia, "Deare
dame, 145
And you, good Sir, I wote that of youre toyle
And labors long, through which ye hither
came,
Ye both forwearied be: therefore, a while
I read² you rest, and to your bowres re-
coyle."³
Then called she a Groome,⁴ that forth him
ledd 150
Into a goodly lodge, and gan despoile
Of puissant armes, and laid in easie bedd
His name was meeke Obedience, rightfully
aredd.⁵

1 action.
4 servant.2 advise.
5 proclaimed.

3 retire.

18

Now when their wearie limbes with kindly
rest,
And bodies were refresht with dew repast, 155
Fayre Una gan Fidelia fayre request,
To have her knight into her schoolehous
plaste,
That of her heavenly learning he might taste,
And heare the wisdom of her wordes divine.
She graunted; and that knight so much
agaste,¹ 160
That she him taught celestiall discipline,
And opened his dull eyes, that light mote in
them shine.

19

And that her sacred Booke, with blood
ywritt,
That none could reade except she did them
teach,
She unto him disclosed every whitt; 165
And heavenly documents thereout did preach,
That weaker witt of man could never reach;
Of God; of grace; of justice; of free-will;
That wonder was to heare her goodly speach:
For she was hable with her wordes to kill, 170
And rase againe to life the hart that she did
thrill.²

20

And, when she list poure out her larger
spright,
She would commaund the hasty Sunne to
stay,
Or backward turne his course from hevens
hight:
Sometimes great hostes of men she could
dismay; 175
Dry-shod to passe she parts the flouds in
tway;
And eke huge mountaines from their native
seat
She would commaund themselves to beare
away,
And throw in raging sea with roaring threat.
Almightie God her gave such powre and
puissaunce great. 180

21

The faithfull knight now grew in litle space,
By hearing her, and by her sisters lore,
To such perfection of all heavenly grace,
That wretched world he gan for to abhore,
And mortall life gan loath as thing forlore, 185
Greeved with remembrance of his wicked
wayes,
And prickt with anguish of his sinnes so sore,
1 favored. 2 pierce.

That he desirde to end his wretched dayes:
So much the dart of sinfull guilt the soule
dismayes.

22

But wise Speranza gave him comfort
sweet, 190
And taught him how to take assured hold
Upon her silver anchor, as was meet;
Els had his sinnes, so great and manifold,
Made him forget all that Fidelia told.
In this distressed doubtfull agony, 195
When him his dearest Una did behold
Disdeining life, desiring leave to dye,
She found her selfe assayld with great per-
plexity;

23

And came to Cælia to declare her smart;
Who, well acquainted with that commune
plight, 200
Which sinfull horror workes in wounded hart,
Her wisely comforted all that she might,
With goodly counsell and advisement right;
And streightway sent with carefull diligence,
To fetch a Leach¹ the which had great
insight 205
In that disease of grieved conscience,
And well could cure the same: His name was
Patience.

24

Who, comming to that sowle-diseased
knight,
Could hardly him intreat to tell his grief:
Which knowne, and all that noyd his heavie
spright 210
Well searcht, eftsoones he gan apply relief
Of salves and med'cines, which had passing
prief;²
And thereto added wordes of wondrous might.
By which to ease he him recured brief,
And much aswag'd the passion³ of his
plight, 215
That he his paine endur'd, as seeming now
more light.

25

But yet the cause and root of all his ill,
Inward corruption and infected sin,
Not purg'd nor heald, behind remained still,
And festring sore did ranckle yett within, 220
Close creeping twixt the marow and the
skin:
Which to extirpe, he laid him privily
Downe in a darksome lowly place far in,

1 doctor.
3 pain.

2 surpassing power.

Whereas he meant his corrosives to apply,
And with streight diet tame his stubborne
malady. 225

26

In ashes and sackcloth he did array
His daintie corse, proud humors to abate;
And dieted with fasting every day,
The swelling of his woundes to mitigate;
And made him pray both earely and eke
late: 230

And ever, as superfluous flesh did rott,
Amendment readie still at hand did wayt,
To pluck it out with pincers fyrie whott,
That soone in him was lefte no one corrupted
jott.¹

27

And bitter Penance, with an yron
whip, 235
Was wont him once to disple every day:
And sharp Remorse his hart did prick and
nip,
That drops of blood thence like a well did
play:

And sad Repentance used to embay
His blamefull body in salt water sore, 240
The filthy blottes of sin to wash away.
So in short space they did to health restore
The man that would not live, but erst lay at
deathes dore.

28

In which his torment often was so great,
That like a Lyon he would cry and rore, 245
And rend his flesh, and his owne synewes eat.
His owne deare Una, hearing evermore
His ruefull shriekes and gronings, often tore
Her guiltlesse garments and her golden
heare,
For pittie of his payne and anguish sore: 250
Yet all with patience wisely she did beare,
For well she wist his cryme could els be never
cleare.

29

Whom, thus recover'd by wise Patience
And trew Repentance, they to Una brought;
Who, joyous of his cured conscience, 255
Him dearely kist, and fayrely eke besought
Himselfe to chearish, and consuming thought
To put away out of his carefull brest.
By this Charissa, late in child-bed brought,
Was woxen strong, and left her fruitfull
nest: 260
To her fayre Una brought this unacquainted
guest.

¹ smallest fragment.

30

She was a woman in her freshest age,
Of wondrous beauty, and of bounty ¹ rare,
With goodly grace and comely personage,
That was on earth not easie to compare; 265
Full of great love, but Cupids wanton snare
As hell she hated; chaste in worke and will:
Her necke and brests were ever open bare,
That ay thereof her babes might sucke their
fill;
The rest was all in yellow robes arayed
still. 270

31

A multitude of babes about her hong,
Playing their sportes, that joyd her to be-
hold;
Whom still she fed whiles they were weake
and young
But thrust them forth still as they waxed old:
And on her head she wore a tyre of gold, 275
Adorn'd with gemmes and owches wondrous
fayre,
Whose passing price uneath was to be told:
And by her syde there sate a gentle payre,
Of turtle doves, she sitting in an yvory
chayre.

32

The knight and Una entring fayre her
greet, 280
And bid her joy of that her happy brood;
Who them requites with court'sies seeming
meet,
And entertaynes with friendly chearefull
mood.
Then Una her besought, to be so good
As in her vertuous rules to schoole her
knight, 285
Now after all his torment well withstood
In that sad house of Penance, where his
spright
Had past the paines of hell and long-enduring
night.

33

She was right joyous of her just request;
And taking by the hand that Faeries
sonne, 290
Gan him instruct in everie good behest,
Of love, and righteousness, and well to donne;
And wrath and hatred warely to shonne,
That drew on men Gods hatred and his wrath,
And many soules in dolours had fordonne: 295
In which when him she well instructed hath,
From whence to heaven she teacheth him
the ready path.

¹ goodness.

34

Wherein his weaker wandring steps to
 guyde,
 An aunccient matrone she to her does call,
 Whose sober lookes her wisdom well
 descryde;¹ 300
 Her name was Mercy; well knowne over-all
 To be both gracious and eke liberall:
 To whom the carefull charge of him she gave,
 To leade aright, that he should never fall
 In all his waies through this wide worldes
 wave; 305
 That Mercy in the end his righteous soule
 might save.

35

The godly Matrone by the hand him beares
 Forth from her presence, by a narrow way,
 Scattered with bushy thornes and ragged
 breares,
 Which still before him she remov'd away, 310
 That nothing might his ready passage stay:
 And ever, when his feet encombred were,
 Or gan to shrink, or from the right to stray,
 She held him fast, and firmly did upbears,
 As carefull Nourse her child from falling oft
 does reare. 315

36

Eftsoones unto an holy Hospitall,
 That was fore by the way, she did him bring;
 In which seven Bead-men,² that had vowed all
 Their life to service of high heavens King,
 Did spend their daies in doing godly thing. 320
 Their gates to all were open evermore,
 That by the wearie way were traveling;
 And one sate wayting ever them before,
 To call in commers-by that needy were and
 pore.

37

The first of them, that eldest was and
 best, 325
 Of all the house had charge and government,
 As Guardian and Steward of the rest.
 His office was to give entertainment
 And lodging unto all that came and went;
 Not unto such as could him feast againe, 330
 And double quite for that he on them spent;
 But such as want of harbour did constraine:
 Those for Gods sake his dewty was to en-
 tertaine.

38

The second was an Almner³ of the place;
 His office was the hungry for to feed, 335

¹ revealed.² men who pray for others.³ Almoner, a distributor of charity.

And thirsty give to drinke; a worke of grace,
 He feard not once himselfe to be in need,
 Ne car'd to hoord for those whom he did
 breede;

The grace of God he layd up still in store,
 Which as a stocke he left unto his seede. 340
 He had enough; what need him care for
 more?

And had he lesse, yet some he would give to
 the pore.

39

The third had of their wardrobe custody,
 In which were not rich tyres, nor garments
 gay,
 The plumes of pride, and winges of vanity, 345
 But clothes meet to keepe keene cold away,
 And naked nature seemely to aray;
 With which bare wretched wights he dayly
 clad,
 The images of God in earthly clay;
 And, if that no spare clothes to give he
 had, 350
 His owne cote he would cut, and it distribute
 glad.

40

The fourth appointed by his office was
 Poore prisoners to relieve with gracious ayd,
 And captives to redeeme with price of bras
 From Turkes and Sarazins, which them had
 stayd; 355
 And though they faulty were, yet well he
 wayd,
 That God to us forgiveth every howre
 Much more then that why they in bands
 were layd;
 And he, that harrowd hell¹ with heaveie
 stowre,
 The faulty soules from thence brought to his
 heavenly bowre. 360

41

The fift had charge sick persons to attend,
 And comfort those in point of death which
 lay;
 For them most needeth comfort in the end,
 When sin, and hell, and death, doe most dis-
 may
 The feeble soule departing hence away. 365
 All is but lost, that living we bestow,
 If not well ended at our dying day.
 O man! have mind of that last bitter throw:
 For as the tree does fall, so lyes it ever
 low.

¹ The reference is to the "harrowing of hell" by Christ
 when, after his death, he descended to hell and redeemed
 worthy soules.

42

The sixt had charge of them now being
 dead, 370
 In seemely sort their corses to engrave,
 And deck with dainty flowres their brydall
 bed,
 That to their heavenly spouse both sweet
 and brave
 They might appeare, when he their soules
 shall save.
 The wondrous workmanship of Gods owne
 mould, 375
 Whose face he made all beastes to feare, and
 gave
 All in his hand, even dead we honour should.
 Ah, dearest God, me graunt, I dead be not
 defould!

43

The seventh, now after death and buriall
 done,
 Had charge the tender Orphans of the
 dead 380
 And wydowes ayd, least they should be
 undone:
 In face of judgement he their right would
 plead,
 Ne ought the powre of mighty men did dread
 In their defence; nor would for gold or fee
 Be wonne their rightfull causes downe to
 tread; 385
 And, when they stood in most necessitee,
 He did supply their want, and gave them ever
 free.

44

There when the Elfin knight arrived was,
 The first and chiefest of the seven, whose
 care
 Was guests to welcome, towards him did
 pas; 390
 Where seeing Mercie, that his steps upbare
 And alwaies led, to her with reverence rare
 He humbly louted ¹ in meeke lowlinesse,
 And seemely welcome for her *did* prepare:
 For of their order she was Patronesse, 395
 Albe Charissa were their chiefest founderesse.

45

There she awhile him stayes, himselfe to
 rest,
 That to the rest more hable he might bee;
 During which time, in every good behest,
 And godly worke of Almes and charitee, 400
 Shee him instructed with great industree.
 Shortly therein so perfect he became,
 That, from the first unto the last degree,

¹ bowed.

His mortall life he learned had to frame
 In holy righteousness, without rebuke or
 blame. 405

46

Thence forward by that painfull way they
 pas
 Forth to an hill that was both steepe and hy;
 On top whereof a sacred chappell was,
 And eke a little Hermitage thereby,
 Wherein an aged holy man did lie, 410
 That day and night said his devotion,
 Ne other worldly busines did apply:
 His name was heavenly Contemplation;
 Of God and goodnes was his meditation.

47

Great grace that old man to him given
 had; 415
 For God he often saw from heavens hight:
 All ² were his earthly eien both blunt and
 bad,
 And through great age had lost their kindly
 sight,
 Yet wondrous quick and persaunt ² was his
 spright,
 As Eagles eie that can behold the Sunne. 420
 That hill they scale with all their powre and
 might,
 That his fraile thighs, nigh weary and for-
 donne,
 Gan faile; but by her helpe the top at last
 he wonne.

48

There they doe finde that godly aged Sire,
 With snowy lockes adowne his shoulders
 shed; 425
 As hoary frost with spangles doth attire
 The mossy braunches of an Oke halfe ded.
 Each bone might through his body well be
 red
 And every sinew seene, through his long fast;
 For nought he car'd his carcas long unfed; 430
 His mind was full of spiritual repast,
 And pyn'd his flesh to keepe his body low
 and chast.

49

Who, when these two approaching he aspidе,
 At their first presence grew agrieved sore,
 That forst him lay his heavenly thoughts
 aside; 435
 And had he not that Dame respected more,
 Whom highly he did reverence and adore,
 He would not once have moved for the knight.
 They him saluted, standing far afore,

¹ although.² piercing.

Who, well them greeting, humbly did
 requight,⁴⁴⁰
 And asked to what end they clomb that
 tedious hight?

50

"What end," (quoth she) "should cause
 us take such paine,
 But that same end, which every living wight
 Should make his marke high heaven to
 attaine?

Is not from hence the way, that leadeth
 right⁴⁴⁵
 To that most glorious house, that glistreth
 bright

With burning starres and everliving fire,
 Whereof the keies are to thy hand behight¹
 By wise Fidelia? Shee doth thee require,
 To shew it to this knight, according his
 desire."⁴⁵⁰

51

"Thrise happy man," said then the father
 grave,
 "Whose staggering steps thy steady hand
 doth lead,

And shewes the way his sinfull soule to save!
 Who better can the way to heaven aread
 Then thou thyselfe, that was both borne and
 bred⁴⁵⁵
 In hevenly throne, where thousand Angels
 shine?

Thou doest the praiers of the righteous sead
 Present before the majesty divine,
 And his avenging wrath to clemency incline.

52

"Yet, since thou bidst, thy pleasure shalbe
 donne.⁴⁶⁰
 Then come, thou man of earth, and see the
 way,

That never yet was seene of Faeries sonne;
 That never leads the traveler astray,
 But after labors long and sad delay,
 Brings them to joyous rest and endlesse
 blis.⁴⁶⁵

But first thou must a season fast and pray,
 Till from her bands the spright assoiled² is,
 And have her strength recur'd from fraile
 infirmities."

53

That done, he leads him to the highest
 Mount,
 Such one as that same mighty man³ of
 God,⁴⁷⁰

That blood-red billowes, like a walled front,
 1 entrusted. 2 released. 3 Moses.

On either side disparted with his rod,
 Till that his army dry-foot through them
 yod,⁴

Dwelt forty daies upon; where, writt in stone
 With bloody letters by the hand of God,⁴⁷⁵
 The bitter doome of death and balefull mone
 He did receive, whiles flashing fire about him
 shone:

54

Or like that sacred hill,² whose head full
 hie,

Adorn'd with fruitfull Olives all arownd,
 Is, as it were for endlesse memory⁴⁸⁰
 Of that deare Lord who oft thereon was
 fownd,

For ever with a flowring girlond crownd:
 Or like that pleasaunt Mount,³ that is for ay
 Through famous Poets verse each where
 renownd,

On which the thrise three learned Ladies⁴
 play⁴⁸⁵
 Their heavenly notes, and make full many a
 lovely lay.

55

From thence, far off he unto him did shew
 A little path that was both steepe and long,
 Which to a goodly City led his vew,
 Whose wals and towres were builded high and
 strong⁴⁹⁰

Of perle and precious stone, that earthly tong
 Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell;
 Too high a ditty⁵ for my simple song.

The City of the greate king hight it well,
 Wherein eternall peace and happinesse doth
 dwell.⁴⁹⁵

56

As he thereon stood gazing, he might see
 The blessed Angels to and fro descend
 From highest heven in gladsome companee,
 And with great joy into that City wend,
 As commonly as frend does with his frend.⁵⁰⁰
 Whereat he wondred much, and gan enquire,
 What stately building durst so high extend
 Her lofty towres unto the starry sphere,
 And what unknown nation there empeopled
 were?

57

"Faire Knight," (quoth he) "Hierusalem
 that is,⁵⁰⁵
 The new Hierusalem, that God has built
 For those to dwell in that are chosen his,
 His chosen people, purg'd from sinful guilt

1 went.

2 The Mount of Olives.

3 Parnassus.

4 The Muses.

5 subject.

With pretious blood, which cruelly was spilt
 On cursed tree, of that unspotted lam, ⁵¹⁰
 That for the sinnes of al the world was kilt:
 Now are they Saints all in that Citty sam,¹
 More dear unto their God then younglings
 to their dam."

58

"Till now," said then the knight, "I
 weened well,
 That great Cleopolis, where I have beene, ⁵¹⁵
 In which that fairest Faery Queene doth
 dwell,

The fairest citty was that might be seene;
 And that bright towre, all built of christall
 clene,
 Panthea,² seemd the brightest thing that was;
 But now by prooffe all otherwise I weene, ⁵²⁰
 For this great Citty that does far surpas,
 And this bright Angels towre quite dims
 that towre of glas."

59

"Most trew," then said the holy aged man;
 "Yet is Cleopolis, for earthly frame,
 The fairest peece that eie beholden can; ⁵²⁵
 And well beseemes all knights of noble name,
 That covett in th' immortall booke of fame
 To be eternized, that same to haunt,
 And doen their service to that soveraigne
 Dame,
 That glory does to them for guerdon
 graunt: ⁵³⁰
 For she is hevenly borne, and heaven may
 justly vaunt.

60

"And thou, faire ymp, sprong out from
 English race,
 How ever now accompted Elfins sonne,
 Well worthy doest thy service for her grace,
 To aide a virgin desolate, foredonne; ⁵³⁵
 But when thou famous victory hast wonne,
 And high emongst all knights hast hong thy
 shield,
 Thenceforth the suitt³ of earthly conquest
 shonne,
 And wash thy hands from guilt of bloody field:
 For blood can nought but sin, and wars but
 sorrows yield. ⁵⁴⁰

61

"Then seek this path that I to thee
 presage,⁴
 Which after all to heaven shall thee send;

Then peaceably thy painefull pilgrimage
 To yonder same Hierusalem doe bend,
 Where is for thee ordaind a blessed end: ⁵⁴⁵
 For thou, emongst those Saints whom thou
 doest see,
 Shalt be a Saint, and thine owne nations
 frend
 And Patrone: thou Saint George shalt called
 bee,
 Saint George of mery England, the signe of
 victoree."

62

"Unworthy wretch," (quoth he) "of so
 great grace, ⁵⁵⁰
 How dare I thinke such glory to attaine?"
 "These, that have it attaynd, were in like
 cace,
 As wretched men, and lived in like paine."
 "But deeds of armes must I at last be faine
 And Ladies love to leave, so dearly
 bought?" ⁵⁵⁵
 "What need of armes, where peace doth ay
 remaine,"
 (Said he) "and bitter battailes all are fought?
 As for loose loves, they'are vaine, and vanish
 into nought."

63

"O! let me not," (quoth he) "then turne
 againe
 Backe to the world, whose joyes so fruitlesse
 are; ⁵⁶⁰
 But let me heare for aie in peace remaine,
 Or steightway on that last long voiage fare,
 That nothing may my present hope empare."
 "That may not be," (said he) "ne maist thou
 yitt
 Forgoe that royal maides bequeathed
 care, ⁵⁶⁵
 Who did her cause into thy hand committ,
 Till from her cursed foe thou have her freely
 quitt."

64

"Then shall I soone," (quoth he) "so God
 me grace,
 Abett that virgins cause disconsolate,
 And shortly back returne unto this place, ⁵⁷⁰
 To walke this way in Pilgrims poore estate.
 But now aread, old father, why of late
 Didst thou behight me borne of English
 blood,
 Whom all a Faeries sonne doen nominate?"
 "That word shall I," (said he) "avouchen
 good, ⁵⁷⁵
 Sith to thee is unknowne the cradle of thy
 brood.

1 together.

2 What building in London this refers to is hard to say.

3 pursuit. 4 indicate.

65

"For, well I wote, thou springst from ancient race
Of Saxon kinges, that have with mightie hand,
And many bloody battailes fought in face,
High reard their royall throne in Britans land,
And vanquisht them, unable to withstand;
From thence a Faery thee unweeting reft,
There as thou slepst in tender swadling band,
And her base Elfin brood there for thee left:
Such, men do Chaungelings call, so chaung'd
by Faeries theft.

66

"Thence she thee brought into this Faery lond,
And in an heaped furrow did thee hyde;
Where thee a Ploughman all unweeting fond,
As he his toylesome teme that way did guyde,
And brought thee up in ploughmans state to byde,
Whereof Georgos¹ he thee gave to-name;
Till prickt with courage, and thy forces pryde,
To Faery court thou cam'st to seek for fame,
And prove thy puissant armes, as seemes thee best became."

67

"O holy Sire!" (quoth he) "how shall I quight
The many favours I with thee have fownd,
That hast my name and nation redd aright,
And taught the way that does to heaven bownd!"
This saide, adowne he looked to the grownd
To have returnd; but dazed were his eyne
Through passing brightnes, which did quite confound
His feeble sence, and too exceeding shyne.
So darke are earthly thinges compar'd to things divine.

68

At last, whenas himselfe he gan to fynd,
To Una back he cast him to retyre,
Who him awaited still with pensive mynd.
Great thanks, and goodly meed, to that good syre
He thens departing gave for his paynes hyre
So came to Una, who him joyd to see;
And, after litle rest, gan him desyre
Of her adventure myndfull for to bee.
So leave they take of Cælia and her daughters three.

¹ The Greek word for farmer.

CANTO XI

The knight with that old Dragon fights
Two days incessantly:
The third him overthrowes, and gayns
Most glorious victory.

I

High time now gan it wex for Una fayre
To thinke of those her captive Parents deare,
And their forwarsted kingdom to repayre:
Whereto whenas they now approched neare,
With hartie wordes her knight she gan to cheare,
And in her modest maner thus bespake:
"Deare knight, as deare as ever knight was deare,
That all these sorrowes suffer for my sake,
High heaven behold the tedious toyle ye for me take!

2

"Now are we come unto my native soyle,
And to the place where all our perilles dwell;
Here hauntes that feend, and does his dayly spoyle;
Therefore, henceforth, bee at your keeping well,
And ever ready for your foeman fell:
The sparke of noble corage now awake,
And strive your excellent selfe to excell:
That shall ye evermore renowned make
Above all knights on earth, that batteill undertake."

3

And pointing forth, "Lo! yonder is," (said she)
"The brasen towre, in which my parents deare
For dread of that huge feend emprisoned be;
Whom I from far see on the walles appeare,
Whose sight my feeble soule doth greatly cheare:
And on the top of all I do espye
The watchman wayting tydings glad to heare;
That, (O my Parents!) might I happily
Unto you bring, to ease you of your misery!"

4

With that they heard a roaring hideous sownd,
That all the ayre with terror filled wyde,
And seemd uneth to shake the stedfast ground.
Eftsoones that dreadful Dragon they espyde
Where stretcht he lay upon the sunny syde
Of a great hill, himselfe like a great hill:
But, all so soone as he from far descryde

Those glistring armes that heven with light
did fill, 35
He rousd himselfe full blyth, and hastned
them untill.

5

Then badd the knight his Lady yede¹ aloof,
And to an hill herselfe withdraw asyde;
From whence she might behold that bat-
tailes proof,
And eke be safe from daunger far descryde. 40
She him obayd, and turnd a little wyde. —
Now, O thou sacred Muse!² most learned
Dame,
Fayre ympe of Phœbus and his aged bryde,³
The Nourse of time and everlasting fame,
That warlike handes ennoblest with im-
mortall name; 45

6

O! gently come into my feeble brest;
Come gently, but not with that mightie rage,
Wherewith the martiall troupes thou doest
infest,
And hartes of great Heroës doest enrage,
That nought their kindled corage may
aswage: 50
Soone as thy dreadfull trompe begins to
sownd,
The God of warre⁴ with his fiers equipage
Thou doest awake, sleepe never he so sownd,
And scared nations doest with horror sterne
astownd.

7

Fayre Goddesses, lay that furious fitt⁵
asyde, 55
Till I of warres and bloody Mars doe sing,
And Bryton fieldes with Sarazin blood bedyde,
Twixt that great faery Queene and Paynim
king,
That with their horror heven and earth did
ring;
A worke of labour long, and endlesse
prayse: 60
But now a while lett downe that haughtie
string,
And to my tunes thy second tenor rayse,
That I this man of God his godly armes may
blaze.⁶

8

By this, the dreadful Beast drew nigh to
hand,
Halfe flying and halfe footing in his haste, 65

That with his largenesse measured much
land,
And made wide shadow under his huge
waste,
As mountaine doth the valley overcaste.
Approching nigh, he reared high afore
His body monstrous, horrible, and vaste; 70
Which, to increase his wondrous greatnes
more,
Was swoln with wrath and poysen, and with
bloody gore;

9

And over all with brasen scales was armd,
Like plated cote of steele, so couched neare
That nought mote perce; ne might his corse
bee harmd 75
With dint of swerd, nor push of pointed
speare:
Which as an Eagle, seeing pray appeare,
His aery plumes doth rouze,¹ full rudely
dight;
So shaked he, that horror was to heare:
For as the clashing of an Armor bright, 80
Such noyse his rouzed scales did send unto
the knight.

10

His flaggy winges, when forth he did
display,
Were like two sayles, in which the hollow
wynd
Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way:
And eke the pennes,² that did his pineons
bynd, 85
Were like mayne-yardes with flying canvas
lynd;
With which whenas him list the ayre to beat,
And there by force unwonted passage fynd,
The cloudes before him fledd for terror great,
And all the hevens stood still amazed with
his threat. 90

11

His huge long tayle, wownd up in hundred
foldes,
Does overspred his long bras-scaly back,
Whose wreathed boughtes³ when ever he
unfolds,
And thick entangled knots adown does slack,
Bespotted as with shieldes of red and
black, 95
It sweepeth all the land behind him farre,
And of three furlongs does but litle lacke;
And at the point two stinges in fixed arre,
Both deadly sharp, that sharpest steele ex-
ceeden farre.

1 iuffle.

2 feathers.

3 coils.

1 go. 2 Clio, Muse of history.

3 Mnemosyne or Memory.

4 Mars.

5 strain of music.

6 praise.

12

But stinges and sharpest steele did far
exceed

The sharpnesse of his cruel rending clawes:
Dead was it sure, as sure as death in deed,
What ever thing does touch his ravenous
pawes,

Or what within his reach he ever drawes.
But his most hideous head my tongue to
tell

Does tremble; for his deepe devouring jawes
Wyde gaped, like the griesly mouth of hell,
Through which into his darke abyse all
ravin fell.

13

And, that more wondrous was, in either
jaw

Three ranckes of yron teeth enraunged
were,

In which yett trickling blood, and gobbets
raw,

Of late devoured bodies did appeare,
That sight thereof bredd cold congealed
feare;

Which to increase, and all atonce to kill,
A cloud of smothering smoke, and sulphure
seare,

Out of his stinking gorge forth steemed still,
That all the ayre about with smoke and
stench did fill.

14

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining
shields,

Did burne with wrath, and sparkled living
fyre:

As two broad Beacons, sett in open fieldes,
Send forth their flames far off to every
shyre,

And warning give that enimies conspyre
With fire and sword the region to invade:

So flam'd his eyne with rage and rancorous
yre;

But far within, as in a hollow glade,
Those glaring lampes were sett that made a
dreadfull shade.

15

So dreadfully he towards him did pas,
Forelifting up a-loft his speckled brest,
And often bounding on the brused gras,
As for great joyance of his newcome
guest.

Eftsoones he gan advance his haughty crest,
As chauffed¹ Bore his bristles doth upreare;
And shoke his scales to battaile ready drest,

¹ irritated.

That made the Redcrosse knight nigh quake
for feare,
As bidding bold defyaunce to his foeman
neare.

16

The knight gan fayrely couch his steady
speare,

And fiersely ran at him with rigorous might:
The pointed steele, arriving rudely theare,
His harder hyde would nether perce nor
bight,

But, glauncing by, forth passed forward
right.

Yet sore amoved with so puissaunt push,
The wrathfull beast about him turned light,
And him so rudely, passing by, did brush
With his long tayle, that horse and man to
ground did rush.

17

Both horse and man up lightly rose
again,

And fresh encounter towards him address;
But th' ydle stroke yet backe recoyld in
vaine,

And found no place his deadly point to rest.
Exceeding rage enflam'd the furious Beast,
To be avenged of so great despight;

For never felt his imperceable brest
So wondrous force from hand of living wight;
Yet had he prov'd the powre of many a
puissant knight.

18

Then, with his waving wings displayed
wyde,

Himselfe up high he lifted from the
ground,

And with strong flight did forcibly divyde
The yielding ayre, which nigh too feeble
found

Her flitting parts, and element unsound,
To beare so great a weight: he, cutting way
With his broad sayles, about him soared
round;

At last, low stouping with unweldy sway,
Snatcht up both horse and man, to beare
them quite away.

19

Long he them bore above the subject²
plaine,

So far as Ewghen bow a shaft may send,
Till struggling strong did him at last con-
straine

To let them downe before his flightes end:

¹ lying below.

As hagar^d ¹ hauke, presuming to contend
 With hardy fowle above his hable might,
 His wearie pounces ² all in vaine doth spend
 To trusse ³ the pray too heavy for his
 flight; 170

Which, comming down to ground, does free
 it selfe by fight.

20

He so disseized ⁴ of his gryping grosse,⁵
 The knight his thrillant speare againe assayd
 In his bras-plated body to embosse,
 And three mens strength unto the stroake
 he layd; 175

Wherewith the stiffe beame quaked as
 affrayd,

And glauncing from his scaly necke did
 glyde

Close under his left wing, then broad dis-
 playd:

The percing steele there wrought a wound
 full wyde,

That with the uncouth ⁶ smart the Monster
 lowdly cryde. 180

21

He cryde, as raging seas are wont to rore
 When wintry storme his wrathful wreck
 does threat;

The rolling billowes beate the ragged shore,
 As they the earth would shoulder from her
 seat;

And greedy gulfe does gape, as he would
 eat 185

His neighbour element in his revenge:
 Then gin the blustering brethren ⁷ boldly
 threat

To move the world from off his stedfast
 henge,

And boystrous battaile make, each other to
 avenge.

22

The steely head stuck fast still in his
 flesh, 190

Till with his cruell clawes he snatcht the
 wood,

And quite a sunder broke. Forth flowed
 fresh

A gushing river of blacke gory blood,
 That drowned all the land whereon he stood;
 The streame thereof would drive a water-
 mill: 195

Treble augmented was his furious mood

With bitter sence of his deepe rooted ill,
 That flames of fire he threw forth from his
 large nose-thril.

23

His hideous tayle then hurled he about,
 And therewith all enwrapt the nimble
 thyes 200

Of his froth-fomy steed, whose courage stout
 Striving to loose the knott that fast him tyes,
 Himselfe in streighter bandes too rash
 implies,¹

That to the ground he is perforce constraynd
 To throw his ryder; who can ² quickly ryse ²⁰⁵
 From off the earth, with durty blood dis-
 taynd,³

For that reprochfull fall right fowly he dis-
 daynd;

24

And fercely tooke his trenchand blade in
 hand,

With which he stroke so furious and so fell,
 That nothing seemd the puissaunce could
 withstand: 210

Upon his crest the hardned yron fell,
 But his more hardned crest was armd so well,
 That deeper dint therein it would not make;
 Yet so extremely did the buffe ⁴ him quell,
 That from thenceforth he shund the like to
 take, 215

But when he saw them come he did them
 still ⁵ forsake.

25

The knight was wroth to see his stroke
 beguyl^d,⁶

And smot againe with more outrageous might;
 But backe againe the sparring steele recoyld,
 And left not any marke where it did light, ²²⁰
 As if in Adamant rocke it had bene pight.

The beast, impatient of his smarting wound
 And of so fierce and forcible despight,
 Thought with his winges to stye ⁷ above the
 ground;

But his late wounded wing unserviceable
 found. 225

26

Then full of grieve and anguish vehement,
 He lowdly brayd, that like was never heard;
 And from his wide devouring oven sent
 A flake of fire, that flashing in his beard
 Him all amazd, and almost made afeard: ²³⁰
 The scorching flame sore swinged ⁸ all his
 face,

¹ wild. ² claws.

³ To pierce so as to hold a thing together or to get a
 grip on it.

⁴ deprived. ⁵ rough, heavy.

⁶ unusual. ⁷ the winds.

¹ enfolds. ² "gan," did.

⁵ ever. ⁶ foiled.

³ stained.

⁷ ascend.

⁴ blow.

⁸ singed.

And through his armour all his body seard,
That he could not endure so cruell cace,
But thought his armes to leave, and helmet
to unlace.

27

Not that great Champion ¹ of the antique
world,

Whom famous Poetes verse so much doth
vaunt,

And hath for twelve huge labours high extold,
So many furies and sharpe fits did haunt,
When him the poysoned garment did en-
chaunt,

When Centaures blood and bloody verses
charm'd;

As did this knight twelve thousand dolours
daunt,

Whom fyrie steele now burnt, that erst him
arm'd;

That erst him goodly arm'd, now most of all
him harm'd.

28

Faynt, wearie, sore, emboyled, grieved,
brent,

With heat, toyle, wounds, armes, smart, and
inward fire,

That never man such mischiefs did torment:
Death better were; death did he oft desire,
But death will never come when needes
require.

Whom so dismayd when that his foe beheld,
He cast to suffer him no more respire,

But gan his sturdy sterne ² about to weld,
And him so strongly stroke, that to the
ground him feld.

29

It fortun'd, (as fayre it then befell)
Behynd his backe, unweeting, where he
stood,

Of auncient time there was a springing
well,

From which fast trickled forth a silver flood,
Full of great vertues, and for med'cine good:

Whylome, before that cursed Dragon got
That happy land, and all with innocent blood

Defyld those sacred waves, it rightly hot ³
The well of life, ne yet his vertues had forgot:

30

For unto life the dead it could restore,
And guilt of sinfull crimes cleane wash away;
Those that with sickness were infected sore
It could recure; and aged long decay
Renew, as one were borne that very day.

1 Hercules.

2 tail.

3 was named.

Both Silo ¹ this, and Jordan, did excell,
And th' English Bath, and eke the German
Spau:

Ne can Cephise, nor Hebrus, match this
well:

Into the same the knight back overthrown
fell.

270

31

Now gan the golden Phœbus for to steepe
His fierie face in billowes of the west,
And his faint steedes watred in Ocean deepe,
Whiles from their journall ² labours they did
rest;

When that infernall Monster, having kest ²⁷⁵
His wearie foe into that living well,

Gan high advaunce his broad discoloured
brest

Above his wonted pitch, with countenance
fell,

And clapt his yron wings as victor he did
dwell.

32

Which when his pensive Lady saw from
farre,

280

Great woe and sorrow did her soule assay,
As weening that the sad end of the warre;

And gan to highest God entirely pray
That feared chaunce from her to turne away:

With folded hands, and knees full lowly
bent,

285

All night shee watcht, ne once adowne would
lay

Her dainty limbs in her sad dreriment,
But praying still did wake, and waking did
lament.

33

The morrow next gan earely to appeare,
That Titan rose to runne his daily race;

290

But earely, ere the morrow next gan reare
Out of the sea faire Titans deawy face,

Up rose the gentle virgin from her place,
And looked all about, if she might spy

Her loved knight to move his manly pace: ²⁹⁵
For she had great doubt of his safety,

Since late she saw him fall before his enemy.

34

At last she saw where he upstartd brave
Out of the well, wherein he drenched lay:

As Eagle, fresh out of the ocean wave, ³⁰⁰

Where he hath lefte his plumes all hory gray,
And deckt himselfe with fethers youthly gay,

¹ Siloam, the healing pool in the Bible; the rest are famous streams or watering places.
² daily.

Like eyas ¹ hauke up mounts unto the skies,
His newly-budded pineons to assay,
And marveiles at himselfe stil as he flies: ³⁰⁵
So new this new-borne knight to battell new
did rise.

35

Whom when the damned feend so fresh
did spy,
No wonder if he wondred at the sight,
And doubted whether his late enemy
It were, or other new supplied knight. ³¹⁰
He now, to prove his late-renewed might,
High brandishing his bright deaw-burning ²
blade,
Upon his crested scalp so sore did smite,
That to the scull a yawning wound it
made: ³¹⁴
The deadly dint his dulled sences all dismaid.

36

I wote not whether the revenging steele
Were hardned with that holy water dew
Wherein he fell, or sharper edge did feele,
Or his baptized hands now greater grew,
Or other secret vertue did ensew; ³²⁰
Els never could the force of fleshly arme,
Ne molten mettall, in his blood embrew; ³
For till that stownd could never wight him
harne
But subtilty, nor slight, nor might, nor
mighty charme.

37

The cruell wound enraged him so sore, ³²⁵
That loud he yelled for exceeding paine;
As hundred ramping Lions seemd to rore,
Whom ravenous hunger did thereto con-
taine:
Then gan he tosse aloft his stretched
traine,
And therewith scourge the buxome ⁴ aire so
sore, ³³⁰
That to his force to yelden it was faine;
Ne ought his sturdy strokes might stand
afore,
That high trees overthrew, and rocks in
peesces tore.

38

The same advauncing high above his
head,
With sharpe intended ⁵ sting so rude him
smott, ³³⁵
That to the earth him drove, as stricken
dead;

Ne living wight would have him life behott: ¹
The mortall sting his angry needle shott
Quite through his shield, and in his shoulder
seasd,
Where fast it stucke, ne would thereout be
gott: ³⁴⁰
The griefe thereof him wondrous sore diseasd,
Ne might his ranciling paine with patience
be appeasd.

39

But yet, more mindfull of his honour deare
Then of the grievous smart which him did
wring, ³⁴⁴
From loathed soile he can ² him lightly reare,
And strove to loose the far infixed sting:
Which when in vaine he tryde with strug-
geling,
Inflam'd with wrath, his raging blade he
hefte,
And strooke so strongly, that the knotty
string
Of his huge taile he quite a sonder clefte; ³⁵⁰
Five joints thereof he hewd, and but the
stump him lefte.

40

Hart cannot thinke what outrage and what
cries,
With fowle enfouldred ³ smoake and flashing
fire,
The hell-bred beast threw forth unto the
skies, ³⁵⁴
That all was covered with darknesse dire:
Then, fraught with rancour and engorged
yre,
He cast at once him to avenge for all;
And, gathering up himselfe out of the mire
With his uneven wings, did fiercely fall
Upon his sunne-bright shield, and grypt it
fast withall. ³⁶⁰

41

Much was the man encombred with his
hold,
In feare to lose his weapon in his paw,
Ne wist yett how his talaunts ⁴ to unfold;
Nor harder was from Cerberus greedy
jaw ³⁶⁴
To plucke a bone, then from his cruell
claw
To reave ⁵ by strength the griped gage away:
Thrise he assayd it from his foote to draw,
And thrise in vaine to draw it did assay;
It booted nought to thinke to robbe him of
his pray.

¹ young. ² glistening with dew. ³ plunge.
⁴ bending, unresisting. ⁵ outstretched.

¹ held out hope for. ² "gan."
³ like a thunder-storm. ⁴ claws. ⁵ take.

42

Tho, when he saw no power might pre-
vaile, 370
His trusty sword he cald to his last aid,
Wherewith he fiersly did his foe assaile,
And double blowes about him stoutly laid,
That glauncing fire out of the yron plaid,
As sparkles from the Andvile use to fly, 375
When heavy hammers on the wedge are
swaid:
Therewith at last he forst him to unty
One of his grasping feete, him to defend
thereby.

43

The other foote, fast fixed on his shield,
Whenas no strength nor stroks mote him
constraine 380
To loose, ne yet the warlike pledge to yield,
He smott thereat with all his might and
maine,
That nought so wondrous puissaunce might
sustaine:
Upon the joint the lucky steele did light,
And made such way that hewd it quite in
twaine; 385
The paw yett missed not his minisht might,
But hong still on the shield, as it at first was
pight.

44

For grieve thereof and divelish despight,
From his infernall founace forth he threw
Huge flames that dimmed all the heavens
light, 390
Enrold in duskish smoke and brimstone blew:
As burning Aetna from his boyling stew
Doth belch out flames, and rockes in peeces
broke,
And ragged ribs of mountaines molten new,
Enwrapt in coleblacke cloudes and filthy
smoke, 395
That al the land with stench and heven with
horror choke.

45

The heate whereof, and harmefull pesti-
lence,
So sore him noyd, that forst him to retire
A little backward for his best defence,
To save his body from the scorching fire, 400
Which he from hellish entrailes did expire.
It chaunst, (eternall God that chaunce did
guide)
As he recoiled backward, in the mire
His nigh foreweried feeble feet did slide,
And downe he fell, with dread of shame sore
terrifice. 405

46

There grew a goodly tree him faire beside,
Loaden with fruit and apples rosy redd,
As they in pure vermilion had been dide,
Whereof great vertues over-all were redd; 1
For happy life to all which thereon fedd, 410
And life eke everlasting did befall:
Great God it planted in that blessed stedd 2
With his Almighty hand, and did it call
The tree of life, the crime of our first fathers
fall. 414

47

In all the world like was not to be fownd,
Save in that soile, where all good things did
grow,
And freely sprong out of the fruitfull grownd,
As incorrupted Nature did them sow,
Till that dredd Dragon all did overthrow.
Another like faire tree eke grew thereby, 420
Whereof whoso did eat, eftsoones did know
Both good and ill. O mournfull memory!
That tree through one mans fault hath doen
us all to dy.

48

From the first tree forth flowd, as from a
well, 424
A trickling streame of Balme, most soveraine
And dainty deare, which on the ground still
fell,
And overflowed all the fertile plaine,
As it had deawed bene with timely raine:
Life and long health that gracious ointment
gave,
And deadly wounds could heale, and reare
again 430
The sencelesse corse appointed for the grave:
Into that same he fell, which did from death
him save.

49

For nigh thereto the ever damned Beast
Durst not approach, for he was deadly
made,
And al that life preserved did detest; 435
Yet he it oft adventur'd to invade.
By this the drouping day-light gan to fade,
And yield his rowme to sad succeeding night,
Who with her sable mantle gan to shade
The face of earth and wayes of living wight,
And high her burning torch set up in heaven
bright. 441

50

When gentle Una saw the second fall
Of her deare knight, who, weary of long fight
1 perceived. 2 place.

And faint through losse of blood, moov'd not
at all,

But lay, as in a dreame of deepe delight, 445
Besmeard with pretious Balme, whose ver-
tuous might

Did heale his woundes, and scorching heat
alay;

Againe she stricken was with sore affright,
And for his safetie gan devoutly pray,
And watch the noyous night, and wait for
joyous day. 450

51

The joyous day gan early to appeare;
And fayre Aurora from the deawy bed
Of aged Tithone gan herselfe to reare
With rosy cheekes, for shame as blushing
red: 454

Her golden locks for hast were loosely shed
About her eares, when Una her did marke
Clymbe to her charet, all with flowers spred,
From heven high to chace the chearelesse
darke;

With mery note her lowd salutes the mount-
ing larke. 459

52

Then freshly up arose the doughty knight,
All healed of his hurts and woundes wide,
And did himselfe to battaile ready dight;
Whose early foe awaiting him beside
To have devourd, so soone as day he
spyde, 464

When now he saw himselfe so freshly reare,
As if late fight had nought him damnifyde,
He woxe dismaid, and gan his fate to feare:
Nathlesse with wonted rage he him ad-
vaunced neare.

53

And in his first encounter, gaping wyde,
He thought attonce him to have swallowd
quight, 470
And rusht upon him with outrageous pryde;
Who him recontring fierce, as hauke in
flight,

Perforce rebutted backe. The weapon bright,
Taking advantage of his open jaw,
Ran through his mouth with so importune
might, 475

That deepe emperst his darksom hollow maw,
And, back retyrd, his life blood forth with
all did draw.

54

So downe he fell, and forth his life did
breath,
That vanisht into smoke and cloudes swift;

So downe he fell, that th' earth him under-
neath 480

Did grone, as feeble so great load to lift;
So downe he fell, as an huge rocky clift,
Whose false foundation waves have washt
away,

With dreadfull poyse ¹ is from the mayneland
rift,

And rolling downe great Neptune doth dis-
may: 485

So downe he fell, and like an heaped moun-
taine lay.

55

The knight him selfe even trembled at his
fall,

So huge and horrible a masse it seemd;
And his deare Lady, that beheld it all,
Durst not approach for dread which she mis-
deemd; 490

But yet at last, whenas the direfull feend
She saw not stirre, off-shaking vaine affright
She nigher drew, and saw that joyous end:
Then God she prayd, and thankt her faith-
full knight,

That had atchieve so great a conquest by
his might. 495

CANTO XII

Fayre Una to the Redcrosse Knight
Betrouthed is with joy:
Though false Duessa, it to barre,
Her false sleighes doe employ.

I

Behold! I see the haven nigh at hand
To which I meane my wearie course to bend;
Vere ² the maine shete, and beare up with
the land,

The which afore ³ is fayrly to be kend,⁴
And seemeth safe from storms that may
offend; 5

There this fayre virgin wearie of her way
Must landed bee, now at her journeyes end;
There eke my feeble barke a while may stay,
Till mery wynd and weather call her thence
away.

2

Scarsely had Phoebus in the glooming
East 10

Yett harnesssed his fyrie-footed teeme,
Ne reard above the earth his flaming creast,
When the last deadly smoke aloft did steeme,
That signe of last outbreathed life did seeme

¹ crash.² Trim the mainsheet to swing the bow of the ship to leeward.³ ahead.⁴ recognized.

Unto the watchman on the castle-wall; ¹⁵
 Who thereby dead that balefull Beast did
 deeme,
 And to his Lord and Lady lowd gan call,
 To tell how he had seene the Dragons fatall
 fall.

3

Uprose with hasty joy, and feeble speed,
 That aged Syre, the Lord of all that land, ²⁰
 And looked forth, to weet if trew indeed
 Those tydings were, as he did understand:
 Which whenas trew by tryall he out fond,
 He badd to open wyde his brasen gate,
 Which long time had beene shut, and out of
 hond ²⁵
 Proclaymed joy and peace through all his
 state;
 For dead now was their foe, which them for-
 rayed late.

4

Then gan triumphant Trompets sownd on
 hye,
 That sent to heven the ecchoed report
 Of their new joy, and happie victory ³⁰
 Gainst him, that had them long opprest with
 tort, ²
 And fast imprisoned in sieged fort.
 Then all the people, as in solemne feast,
 To him assembled with one full consort,
 Rejoycing at the fall of that great beast, ³⁵
 From whose eternall bondage now they were
 releast.

5

Forth came that auncient Lord, and aged
 Queene,
 Arayd in antique robes downe to the grownd,
 And sad habiliments right well beseene:
 A noble crew about them waited rownd ⁴⁰
 Of sage and sober peres, all gravely gownd;
 Whom far before did march a goodly band
 Of tall young men, all hable armes to sownd;
 But now they laurell braunches bore in hand,
 Glad signe of victory and peace in all their
 land. ⁴⁵

6

Unto that doughtie Conquerour they came,
 And him before themselves prostrating low,
 Their Lord and Patrone loud did him pro-
 clame,
 And at his feet their lawrell boughes did
 throw.

Soone after them, all dauncing on a row, ⁵⁰
 The comely virgins came, with girlands dight,

1 immediately.

2 wrong.

As fresh as flowres in meadow greene doe grow
 When morning deaw upon their leaves doth
 light;
 And in their handes sweet Timbrels all upheld
 on hight.

7

And them before the fry ¹ of children
 yong ⁵⁵
 Their wanton sportes and childish mirth did
 play,
 And to the Maydens sownding tymbrels song
 In well attuned notes a joyous lay,
 And made delightfull musick all the way,
 Untill they came where that faire virgin
 stood: ⁶⁰
 As fayre Diana in fresh sommers day
 Beholdes her nymphes enraung'd in shady
 wood,
 Some wrestle, some do run, some bathe in
 christall flood.

8

So she beheld those maydens meriment
 With chearefull vew; who, when to her they
 came, ⁶⁵
 Themselves to ground with gracious hum-
 blesse bent,
 And her ador'd by honorable name,
 Lifting to heven her everlasting fame:
 Then on her head they sett a girlond greene,
 And crowned her twixt earnest and twixt
 game: ⁷⁰
 Who, in her self-resemblance well beseene,
 Did seeme, such as she was, a goodly maiden
 Queene.

9

And after all the raskall ² many ³ ran,
 Heaped together in rude rablement,
 To see the face of that victorious man, ⁷⁵
 Whom all admired as from heaven sent,
 And gazd upon with gaping wonderment;
 But when they came where that dead Dragon
 lay,
 Stretch on the ground in monstrous large
 extent,
 The sight with ydle feare did them dismay, ⁸⁰
 Ne durst approach him nigh to touch, or once
 assay.

10

Some feard, and fledd; some feard, and well
 it faynd;
 One, that would wiser seeme then all the rest,
 Warnd him not touch, for yet perhaps re-
 maynd

1 swarm.

2 low, common.

3 crowd.

Some lingring life within his hollow brest, 85
Or in his wombe might lurke some hidden nest

Of many Dragonettes, his fruitfull seede:
Another saide, that in his eyes did rest
Yet sparkkling fyre, and badd thereof take heed;
Another said, he saw him move his eyes indeed. 90

11

One mother, whenas her foolehardy chyld
Did come too neare, and with his talants play,
Halfe dead through feare, her litle babe reuyld,

And to her gossibs¹ gan in counsell say;
"How can I tell, but that his talants may 95
Yet scratch my sonne, or rend his tender hand?"

So diversly them selves in vaine they fray;²
Whiles some more bold to measure him nigh stand,

To prove how many acres he did spred of land.

12

Thus flocked all the folke him rownd about; 100

The whiles that hoarie king, with all his traine,

Being arrived where that champion stout
After his foes defeasaunce did remaine,
Him goodly greetes, and fayre does enter-
tayne

With princely gifts of yvory and gold, 105
And thousand thanks him yeeldes for all his paine.

Then when his daughter deare he does behold,

Her dearly doth imbrace, and kisseth manifold.

13

And after to his Pallace he them bringes,
With shaumes, and trumpets, and with Clarions sweet; 110

And all the way the joyous people singes,
And with their garments strowes the paved street;

Whence mounting up, they fynd purvey-
aunce³ meet

Of all, that royall Princes court became;
And all the floore was underneath their feet 115

Bespredd with costly scarlott of great name,⁴
On which they lowly sitt, and fitting purpose frame.

1 friends. 2 terrify. 3 provision. 4 quality.

14

What needes me tell their feast and goodly guize,

In which was nothing riotous nor vaine?
What needes of dainty dishes to devize, 120
Of comely services, or courtly trayne?

My narrow leaves cannot in them contayne
The large discourse of roiall Princes state.

Yet was their manner then but bare and playne;

For th' antique world excesse and pryde did hate: 125

Such proud luxurious pompe is swollen up but late.

15

Then, when with meates and drinkes of every kinde

Their fervent appetites they quenched had,
That auncient Lord gan fit occasion finde,
Of straunge adventures, and of perils sad 130

Which in his travell him befallen had,
For to demanda of his renowned guest:

Who then with utt'rance grave, and coun-
t'nance sad,

From poynt to poynt, as is before exprest,
Discourst his voyage long, according his request. 135

16

Great pleasure, mixt with pittifull regard,
That godly King and Queene did passion-
ate;¹

Whyles they his pittifull adventures heard;
That oft they did lament his lucklesse state,
And often blame the too importune² fate 140
That heaped on him so many wrathfull wreakes;³

For never gentle knight, as he of late,
So tossed was in fortunes cruell freakes:

And all the while salt teares bedewd the hearers cheaks.

17

Then sayd that royall Pere in sober wise; 145

"Deare Sonne, great beene the evils which ye bore

From first to last in your late enterprise,
That I note⁴ whether praise or pitty more;
For never living man, I weene, so sore

In sea of deadly daungers was distrest: 150
But since now safe ye seised have the shore,

And well arrived are, (high God be blest!)
Let us devize of ease and everlasting rest."

1 express with emotion.
3 punishments.

2 harsh.
4 "ne wot," know not.

18

"Ah dearest Lord!" said then that doughty knight,
 "Of ease or rest I may not yet devise; 155
 For by the faith which I to armes have plight,
 I bownden am streight after this emprise,
 As that your daughter can ye well advize,
 Backe to retourne to that great Faery Queene,
 And her to serve sixe yeares in warlike
 wize, 160
 Gainst that proud Paynim king that works
 her teene: 1
 Therefore I ought crave pardon, till I there
 have beene."

19

"Unhappy falls that hard necessity,"
 (Quoth he) "the troubler of my happy peace,
 And vowed foe of my felicity; 165
 Ne I against the same can justly preace: 2
 But since that band ye cannot now release,
 Nor doen undo, (for vowes may not be vayne)
 Soone as the terme of those six yeares shall
 cease,
 Ye then shall hither backe retourne
 agayne, 170
 The marriage to accomplish vovd betwixt
 you twain."

20

"Which, for my part, I covet to performe
 In sort as 3 through the world I did proclame,
 That who-so kild that monster most deforme,
 And him in hardy battayle overcame, 175
 Should have mine onely daughter to his
 Dame, 4
 And of my kingdome heyre apparaunt bee:
 Therefore, since now to thee perteynes the
 same
 By dew desert of noble chevalree,
 Both daughter and eke kingdome lo! I yield
 to thee." 180

21

Then forth he called that his daughter
 fayre,
 The fairest Un', his onely daughter deare,
 His onely daughter and his only hayre;
 Who forth proceeding with sad sober cheare,
 As bright as doth the morning starre
 appeare 185
 Out of the East, with flaming lockes bedight,
 To tell that dawning day is drawing neare,
 And to the world does bring long-wished light:
 So faire and fresh that Lady shewd herselfe
 in sight.

1 injury.
 3 just as.

2 press, contend.
 4 as his wife.

22

So faire and fresh, as freshest flowre in
 May; 190
 For she had layd her mournfull stole aside,
 And widow-like sad wimple 1 throwne away,
 Wherewith her heavenly beautie she did hide,
 Whiles on her wearie journey she did ride;
 And on her now a garment she did weare 195
 All lilly white, withoutten spot or pride,
 That seemd like silke and silver woven neare; 2
 But neither silke nor silver therein did
 appeare.

23

The blazing brightnesse of her beauties
 beame,
 And glorious light of her sunshyny face, 200
 To tell were as to strive against the streame:
 My ragged rimes are all too rude and bace
 Her heavenly lineaments for to enchace.
 Ne wonder; for her own deare loved knight,
 All were she daily with himselfe in place, 205
 Did wonder much at her celestial sight:
 Oft had he seene her faire, but never so faire
 dight.

24

So fairely dight when she in presence came,
 She to her Syre made humble reverence,
 And bowed low, that her right well be-
 came, 210
 And added grace unto her excellence:
 Who with great wisdom and grave eloquence
 Thus gan to say — But, eare he thus had
 sayd,
 With flying speede, and seeming great pre-
 tence,
 Came running in, much like a man dis-
 mayd, 215
 A Messenger with letters, which his message
 sayd.

25

All in the open hall amazed stood
 At suddeinnesse of that unwary 3 sight,
 And wondred at his breathlesse hasty mood:
 But he for nought would stay his passage
 right, 220
 Till fast before the king he did alight;
 Where falling flat great humblesse he did
 make,
 And kist the ground whereon his foot was
 pight; 4
 Then to his handes that writt he did betake,
 Which he disclosing 5 read thus, as the paper
 spake: 225

1 linen head- and neck-dress.
 3 unexpected.

2 closely.
 5 unfolding.

26

"To thee, most mighty king of Eden fayre,
Her greeting sends in these sad lines address,
The wofull daughter and forsaken heyre
Of that great Emperour of all the West;
And bids thee be advized for the best, ²³⁰
Ere thou thy daughter linck, in holy band
Of wedlocke, to that new unknowne guest:
For he already plighted his right hand
Unto another love, and to another land.

27

"To me, sad mayd, or rather widow
sad, ²³⁵
He was affyaunced long time before,
And sacred pledges he both gave, and had,
False erraunt knight, infamous, and for-
swore!
Witnesse the burning Altars, which he swore,
And guilty heavens of his bold perjury; ²⁴⁰
Which though he hath polluted oft of yore,
Yet I to them for judgement just doe fly,
And them conjure t' avenge this shamefull
injury.

28

"Therefore, since mine he is, or free or bond,
Or false or trew, or living or else dead, ²⁴⁵
Withhold, O soverayne Prince! your hasty
hond
From knitting league with him, I you aread;
Ne weene my right with strength adowne to
tread,
Through weaknesse of my widowhed or woe;
For truth is strong her rightfull cause to
plead, ²⁵⁰
And shall finde friends, if need requireth soe.
So bids thee well to fare, Thy neither friend
nor foe,

Fidessa."

29

When he these bitter byting wordes had red,
The tydings straunge did him abashed make,
That still he sate long time astonished, ²⁵⁵
As in great muse, ne word to creature spake.
At last his solemn silence thus he brake,
With doubtfull eyes fast fixed on his guëst:
"Redoubted knight, that for myne only sake
Thy life and honour late adventrest, ²⁶⁰
Let nought be hid from me that ought to be
exprest.

30

"What meane these bloody vowes and idle
threats,
Throwne out from womanish impatient
mynd?

What heavens? what altars? what enraged
heates,
Here heaped up with termes of love
unkynd, ²⁶⁵
My conscience cleare with guilty bands
would bynd?
High God be witnesse that I guiltlesse
ame;
But if yourselfe, Sir knight, ye faulty fynd,
Or wrapped be in loves of former Dame,
With cryme doe not it cover, but disclose
the same." ²⁷⁰

31

To whom the Redcrosse knight this an-
swere sent:
"My Lord, my king, be nought hereat
dismayd,
Till well ye wote by grave intendiment,¹
What woman, and wherefore, doth me
upbrayd
With breach of love and loialty betrayd. ²⁷⁵
It was in my mishaps, as hitherward
I lately traveld, that unwares I strayd
Out of my way, through perils straunge and
hard,
That day should faile me ere I had them all
declard.

32

"There did I find, or rather I was fownd ²⁸⁰
Of this false woman that Fidessa hight,
Fidessa hight the falsest Dame on grownd,
Most false Duessa, royall richly dight,
That easy was t' inveigle weaker sight:
Who by her wicked arts and wylie skill, ²⁸⁵
Too false and strong for earthly skill or
might,
Unwares me wrought unto her wicked will,
And to my foe betrayd when least I feared
ill."

33

Then stepped forth the goodly royall
Mayd,
And on the ground herselfe prostrating
low, ²⁹⁰
With sober countenance thus to him sayd:
"O! pardon² me, my soveraine Lord, to
sheow
The secret treasons, which of late I know
To have bene wrought by that false sorcer-
esse:
Shee, onely she, it is, that earst did throw ²⁹⁵
This gentle knight into so great distresse,
That death him did awaite in daily wretched-
nesse.

¹ attention.² allow.

34

"And now it seemes, that she suborned hath
This crafty messenger with letters vaine,
To worke new woe and improvided ¹ scath, ³⁰⁰
By breaking of the band betwixt us twaine;
Wherein she used hath the practicke ² paine
Of this false footman, clokt with simplenesse,
Whome if ye please for to discover plaine,
Ye shall him Archimago find, I ghesse, ³⁰⁵
The falsest man alive: who tries, shall find
no lesse."

35

The king was greatly moved at her speech;
And, all with sudden indignation fraight,³
Bad on that Messenger rude hands to reach.
Eftsoones the Gard, which on his state did
wait, ³¹⁰
Attacht that faytor ⁴ false, and bound him
strait;
Who seeming sorely chauffed at his band,
As chained beare whom cruell dogs doe bait,
With ydle force did faine them to withstand,
And often semblance made to scape out of
their hand. ³¹⁵

36

But they him layd full low in dungeon
deepe,
And bound him hand and foote with yron
chains;
And with continual watch did warely keepe.
Who then would thinke that by his subtile
trains
He could escape fowle death or deadly
pains? ³²⁰
Thus, when that Princes wrath was pacifide,
He can renew the late forbidden baines,⁵
And to the knight his daughter deare he tyde
With sacred rites and vowes for ever to abyde.

37

His owne two hands the holy knotts did
knitt, ³²⁵
That none but death for ever can divide;
His owne two hands, for such a turne most
fitt,
The housling ⁶ fire did kindle and provide,
And holy water thereon sprinckled wide;
At which the bushy teade ⁷ a groome did
light, ³³⁰
And sacred lamp in secret chamber hide,
Where it should not be quenched day nor
night,
For feare of evil fates, but burnen ever bright.

¹ unforeseen.² crafty.³ fraught.⁴ impostor.⁵ banns.⁶ sacramental.⁷ torch.

38

Then gan they sprinckle all the posts with
wine,
And made great feast to solemnize that
day: ³³⁵
They all perfumde with frankincense divine,
And precious odours fetcht from far away,
That all the house did sweat with great aray:
And all the while sweete Musicke did apply
Her curious skill the warbling notes to
play, ³⁴⁰
To drive away the dull Melancholy;
The whiles one sung a song of love and jollity.

39

During the which there was an heavenly
noise
Heard sownd through all the Pallace pleas-
antly,
Like as it had bene many an Angels voice ³⁴⁵
Singing before th' eternall majesty,
In their trinall ¹ triplicities ² on hye:
Yett wist no creature whence that heavenly
sweet
Proceeded, yet each one felt secretly
Himselfe thereby reft of his sences meet, ³⁵⁰
And ravished with rare impression in his
sprite.

40

Great joy was made that day of young and
old,
And solemne feast proclaymd throughout
the land,
That their exceeding merth may not be told:
Suffice it heare by signes to understand ³⁵⁵
The usuall joyes at knitting of loves band.
Thrise happy man the knight himselfe did
hold,
Possessed of his Ladies hart and hand;
And ever, when his eie did her behold,
His heart did seeme to melt in pleasures
manifold. ³⁶⁰

41

Her joyous presence, and sweet company,
In full content he there did long enjoy;
Ne wicked envy, ne vile gealosy,
His deare delights were hable to annoy:
Yet, swimming in that sea of blisfull joy, ³⁶⁵
He nought forgott how he whilome had
sworne,
In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,
Unto his Faery Queene backe to retourne;
The which he shortly did, and Una left to
mourne.

¹ threefold.² trinities, referring to the nine orders of angels.

42

Now, strike your sailes, yee jolly Mariners,³⁷⁰
 For we be come unto a quiet rode,¹
 Where we must land some of our passengers,
 And light this weary vessell of her lode:
 Here she a while may make her safe abode,
 Till she repaired have her tackles spent,³⁷⁵
 And wants supplide; And then againe abroad
 On the long voiage whereto she is bent:
 Well may she speede, and fairely finish her
 intent!

AMORETTI

I

Happy ye leaves! when as those lilly hands,
 Which hold my life in their dead doing²
 might,
 Shall handle you, and hold in loves soft
 bands,
 Lyke captives trembling at the victors sight.
 And happy lines! on which, with starry
 light,⁵
 Those lamping³ eyes will deigne sometimes
 to look,
 And reade the sorrowes of my dying spright,⁴
 Written with teares in harts close bleeding
 book.
 And happy rymes! bath'd in the sacred
 brooke
 Of Helicon,⁵ whence she derived is,¹⁰
 When ye behold that angels blessed looke,
 My soules long lacked foode, my heavens
 blis.
 Leaves, lines, and rymes, seeke her to please
 alone,
 Whom if ye please, I care for other none.

34

Lyke as a ship, that through the Ocean
 wyde,
 By conduct of some star doth make her way;
 Whenas a storme hath dimd her trusty guyde,
 Out of her course doth wander far astray!
 So I, whose star, that wont with her bright
 ray⁵
 Me to direct, with cloudes is over cast,
 Doe wander now, in darknesse and dismay,
 Through hidden perils round about me plast.
 Yet hope I well that, when this storme is
 past,
 My Helice,⁶ the lodestar of my lyfe,¹⁰
 Will shine again, and looke on me at last,

¹ roadstead, anchorage.² death-dealing.³ flashing.⁴ spirit.⁵ Hill in Greece dedicated to the Muses.⁶ Constellation of the Great Bear.

With lovely light to cleare my cloudy grief.
 Till then I wander carefull, comfortlesse,
 In secret sorow, and sad pivenessse.

79

Men call you fayre, and you doe credit it,
 For that your selfe ye dayly such doe see:
 But the trew fayre, that is the gentle wit
 And vertuous mind, is much more praysd
 of me.

For all the rest, how ever fayre it be,⁵
 Shall turne to nought and loose that glorious
 hew:

But onely that is permanent and free
 From frayle corruption, that doth flesh en-
 sew.

That is true beautie: that doth argue you
 To be divine and borne of heavenly seed:¹⁰
 Deriv'd from that fayre Spirit from whom al
 true

And perfect beauty did at first proceed.
 He onely fayre, and what he fayre hath made;
 All other fayre, lyke flowres, untymely fade.

82

Joy of my life! full oft for loving you
 I blesse my lot, that was so lucky placed:
 But then the more your owne mishap I rew,
 That are so much by so meane love embased.
 For, had the equall heavens so much you
 graced⁵

In this as in the rest, ye mote invent
 Som heavenly wit, whose verse could have
 enchased

Your glorious name in golden moniment.
 But since ye deignd so goodly to relent
 To me your thrall, in whom is little worth,¹⁰
 That little, that I am, shall all be spent
 In setting your immortall prayes forth:
 Whose lofty argument, uplifting me,
 Shall lift you up unto an high degree.

1594

PROTHALAMION;

OR A SPOUSAL VERSE MADE IN HONOUR
 OF THE DOUBLE MARRIAGE OF THE
 LADIE ELIZABETH AND THE LADIE
 KATHERINE SOMERSET

I

Calme was the day, and through the tremb-
 ling ayre

Sweete breathing Zephyrus did softly play
 A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay
 Hot Titans¹ beames, which then did glyster
 fayre:

¹ the sun's.

When I, whom sullein care, 5
Through discontent of my long fruitlesse
stay

In princes court, and expectation vayne
Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away,
Like empty shaddowes, did afflict my brayne,
Walkt forth to ease my payne 10
Along the shoare of silver streaming
Themmes,

Whose ruttie¹ bancke, the which his river
hemmes,

Was paynted all with variable flowers,
And all the meades adorn'd with daintie
gemmes,

Fit to decke maydens bowres, 15

And crowne their paramours,
Against the brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song.

2

There, in a meadow, by the rivers side,
A flocke of nymphes I chaunced to espy, 20
All lovely daughters of the flood thereby,
With goodly greenish locks all loose untyde,
As each had bene a bryde,
And each one had a little wicker basket,
Made of fine twigs entrayled curiously, 25
In which they gathered flowers to fill their
flasket;

And with fine fingers cropt full feateously²
The tender stalkes on hye.

Of every sort, which in that meadow grew,
They gathered some; the violet pallid blew,
The little dazie, that at evening closes, 31
The virgin lillie, and the primrose trew,

With store of vermeil roses,
To decke their bridegromes posies
Against the brydale day, which was not
long; 35

Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song.

3

With that I saw two swannes of goodly hewe
Come softly swimming downe along the lee; 3
Two fairer birds I yet did never see:

The snow which doth the top of Pindus⁴
strew 40

Did never whiter shew,
Nor Jove himselfe, when he a swan would be
For love of Leda,⁵ whiter did appear:
Yet Leda was, they say, as white as he,
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing
neare; 45

¹ rooty. ² skilfully. ³ river.

⁴ A mountain in Greece.

⁵ Beloved by Jove in the shape of a swan.

So purely white they were,
That even the gentle streame, the which
them bare,

Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes
spare

To wet their silken feathers, least they might
Soyle their fayre plumes with water not so
fayre, 50

And marre their beauties bright,
That shone as heavens light,
Against their brydale day, which was not
long;

Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song.

4

Eftsoones¹ the nymphes, which now had
flowers their fill, 55

Ran all in haste to see that silver brood,
As they came floating on the christal flood;
Whom when they sawe, they stood amazed
still,

Their wondring eyes to fill.
Them seem'd they never saw a sight so
fayre, 60

Of fowles so lovely, that they sure did deeme
Them heavenly borne, or to be that same
payre

Which through the skie draw Venus silver
teeme;

For sure they did not seeme
To be begot of any earthly seede, 65

But rather angels or of angels breede:
Yet were they bred of Somers-heat,² they say,
In sweetest season, when each flower and
weede

The earth did fresh aray;
So fresh they seem'd as day, 70
Even as their brydale day, which was not
long;

Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song.

5

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew
Great store of flowers, the honour of the field,
That to the sense did fragrant odours
yeild, 75

All which upon those goodly birds they
threw,

And all the waves did strew,
That like old Peneus³ waters they did seeme,
When downe along by pleasant Tempes³
shore,

Scattred with flowres, through Thessaly they
streame, 80

¹ immediately.

² A pun for Somerset.

³ in Thessaly.

That they appeare, through lillies plenteous
store,

Like a brydes chamber flore.

Two of those nymphes, meane while, two
garlands bound

Of freshest flowres which in that mead they
found,

The which presenting all in trim array, ⁸⁵
Their snowie foreheads therewithall they
crownd,

Whil'st one did sing this lay,

Prepar'd against that day,

Against their brydale day, which was not
long:

Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end
my song. ⁹⁰

6

"Ye gentle birdes, the worlds faire ornament,
And heavens glorie, whom this happie hower
Doth leade unto your lovers blissfull bower,
Joy may you have and gentle hearts content
Of your loves complement: ⁹⁵

And let faire Venus, that is Queene of Love,
With her heart-quelling sonne upon you
smile,

Whose smile, they say, hath vertue to remove
All loves dislike, and friendships faultie guile
For ever to assoile. ¹⁰⁰

Let endlesse peace your steadfast hearts
accord,

And blessed plentie wait upon you[r] bord;
And let your bed with pleasures chaste
abound,

That fruitfull issue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound, ¹⁰⁵

And make your joyes redound,
Upon your brydale day, which is not long:

Sweete Themmes, run softlie, till I end my
song."

7

So ended she; and all the rest around
To her redoubled that her undersong, ¹¹⁰
Which said, their bridale daye should not be
long.

And gentle Eccho from the neighbour ground
Their accents did resound.

So forth those joyous birdes did passe along,
Adowne the lee, that to them murmurde
low, ¹¹⁵

As he would speake, but that he lackt a tong,
Yeat did by signes his glad affection show,
Making his streame run slow.

And all the foule which in his flood did dwell
Gan flock about these twaine, that did excell
The rest, so far, as Cynthia ² doth shend ³ ¹²¹

¹ dispel.

² the moon.

³ put to shame.

The lesser starres. So they enranged ¹ well,
Did on those two attend,
And their best service lend,
Against their wedding day, which was not
long: ¹²⁵

Sweete Themmes run softly, till I end my
song.

8

At length they all to mery London came,
To mery London, my most kyndly nurse,
That to me gave this lifes first native source:
Though from another place I take my
name, ¹³⁰

An house of auncient fame.

There when they came, whereas ² those
bricky towres, ³

The which on Themmes brode aged backe
doe ryde,

Where now the studious lawyers have their
bowers

There whylome wont the Templer Knights to
byde, ¹³⁵

Till they decayd through pride:

Next whereunto there standes a stately place,
Where oft I gayned giftes and goodly grace
Of that great Lord, ⁴ which therein wont to
dwell,

Whose want too well now feeles my freendles
case: ¹⁴⁰

But ah here fits not well

Olde woes but joyes to tell

Against the bridale daye, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes runne softly, till I end
my song. ¹⁴⁴

9

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble Peer, ⁵
Great Englands glory and the worlds wide
wonder,

Whose dreadfull name late through all
Spaine did thunder, ⁶

And Hercules two pillors standing neere,
Did make to quake and feare: ¹⁴⁹

Faire branch of Honor, flower of Chevalrie,
That fillest England with thy triumphs fame,

Joy have thou of thy noble victorie,
And endlesse happinesse of thine owne name ⁷

That promiseth the same:

That through thy prowesse and victorious
armes, ¹⁵⁵

¹ placed in a row.

² where.

³ The Temple (Inner and Middle), a set of buildings and gardens extending from the Strand to the Thames; in the fourteenth century it belonged to the Knights Templars; since then, to students of law.

⁴ The Earl of Leicester.

⁵ Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex.

⁶ Referring to Essex's part in capturing Cadiz in 1596.
⁷ Spenser playfully suggests that Essex's name is made up of *ever* + *heureux* (happy).

Thy country may be freed from forraine
harmes:
And great Elisaes glorious name may ring
Through al the world, fil'd with thy wide
alarmes,
Which some brave muse may sing
To ages following, 160
Upon the brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes runne softly, till I end
my song.

10

From those high towers, this noble Lord
issuing,
Like radiant Hesper when his golden hayre
In th' ocean billowes he hath bathed
fayre, 165
Descended to the rivers open vewing,
With a great traine ensuing.

Above the rest were goodly to bee seene
Two gentle knights of lovely face and feature
Beseeming well the bower of anie Queene, 170
With gifts of wit and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature:
That like the twins of Jove¹ they seem'd in
sight,
Which decke the bauldricke of the heavens
bright.
They two forth pacing to the rivers side, 175
Received those two faire brides, their loves
delight,
Which at th' appointed tyde,
Each one did make his bryde,
Against their brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes runne softly, till I end
my song. 180

1596

1 Castor and Pollux, later the constellation Gemini.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1552?-1618)

At a time when every man aspired to be a "complete gentleman," adept in many lines, Raleigh surpassed every one in versatility, displaying unusual skill and achieving prominence in everything he undertook. More than any one he is the embodiment of the Elizabethan era, an age which saw life as a beautiful adventure, and which investigated the things of the spirit as ardently and curiously as it explored lands beyond the seas.

After studying at Oxford, Raleigh was a soldier in France and the Low Countries. In 1579 he went on an unsuccessful voyage of discovery to America with his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert. On his return he helped put down an insurrection in Ireland. In 1584 he headed an expedition to America which founded a colony named by Raleigh "Virginia" in honor of his queen. He took part in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588; later, as admiral, he was present at the attack on the Azores.

As a courtier he stood high in the favor of Elizabeth. As a statesman, he played his part at court in affairs both big and petty, twice going to the Tower, in this dangerous game, after James I became king. And in addition to all these accomplishments, he was a poet who put feeling and sincerity into lyrics that were phrased in the best Elizabethan manner, and an historian, accurate and descriptive, who wrote some of the greatest prose passages in English.

When, in 1618, he was led to the block on Tower Hill, he made his exit from this life with a fine gesture, as befitted a true Elizabethan. The scene has been vividly described by William Oldys, the antiquarian scholar, in his biography of Raleigh, published in 1736.

For the life of Raleigh see E. W. Gosse (English Worthies Series) and Sidney Lee, *Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century* (Scribners), which contains estimates of More, Sidney, Raleigh, Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare. Excellent selections from Raleigh's writings have been made by F. W. C. Hersey (Macmillan) and G. E. Hadow (Oxford University Press).

A VISION UPON THIS CONCEIT
OF THE FAERIE QUEENE

This sonnet was one of the commendatory verses that appeared in the first installment of the *Faerie Queene*, books 1-3, 1590.

Methought I saw the grave where Laura¹ lay,
Within that temple where the vestal flame
Was wont to burn: and, passing by that way,
To see that buried dust of living fame,
Whose tomb fair Love and fairer Virtue
kept, 5

1 Petrarch's lady.

All suddenly I saw the Fairy Queen;
At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept,
And from thenceforth those graces were not
seen,
For they this Queen attended; in whose stead
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse.
Hereat the hardest stones were seen to
bleed, 11
And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did
piece:
Where Homer's spright did tremble all for
grief,
And cursed th' access of that celestial thief.

THE SILENT LOVER

I

Passions are likened best to floods and streams:

The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb.

So, when affection yields discourse, it seems
The bottom is but shallow whence they come.

They that are rich in words, in words discover 5

That they are poor in that which makes a lover.

2

Wrong not, sweet empress of my heart,
The merit of true passion,
With thinking that he feels no smart,
That sues for no compassion. 10

Silence in love bewrays more woe
Than words, though ne'er so witty:
A beggar that is dumb, you know,
May challenge double pity.

Then wrong not, dearest to my heart, 15
My true, though secret passion;
He smarteth most that hides his smart,
And sues for no compassion.

HIS PILGRIMAGE

Give me my scallop-shell ¹ of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gauge; 5
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

Blood must be my body's balmer;
No other balm will there be given;
Whilst my soul, like a quiet palmer,
Traveleth towards the land of heaven, 10
Over the silver mountains,
Where spring the nectar fountains.
There will I kiss
The bowl of bliss;

And drink mine everlasting fill 15
Upon every milken ² hill.
My soul will be a-dry before;
But after, it will thirst no more.

Then by that happy blissful day,
More peaceful pilgrims I shall see, 20

¹ A shell found in Palestine, worn by a pilgrim to show that he had been to the Holy Land.
² abounding in milk.

That have cast off their rags of clay,
And walk apparelled fresh like me.
I'll take them first
To quench their thirst
And taste of nectar suckets,¹ 25
At those clear wells
Where sweetness dwells,
Drawn up by saints in crystal buckets.

And when our bottles and all we
Are filled with immortality, 30
Then the blessed paths we'll travel,
Strowed with rubies thick as gravel;
Ceilings of diamonds, sapphire floors,
High walls of coral, and pearly bowers.
From thence to heaven's bribeless hall, 35
Where no corrupted voices brawl;
No conscience molten into gold,
No forged accuser bought or sold,
No cause deferred, no vain-spent journey, 40
For there Christ is the King's attorney,
Who pleads for all, without degrees,
And He hath angels,² but no fees.
And when the grand twelve-million jury
Of our sins, with direful fury,
Against our souls black verdicts give, 45
Christ pleads His death; and then we live.
Be Thou my speaker, taintless pleader,
Unblotted lawyer, true proceeder!
Thou giv'st salvation, even for alms,
Not with a bribed lawyer's palms. 50
And this is mine eternal plea
To Him that made heaven and earth and sea:
That, since my flesh must die so soon,
And want a head to dine next noon,
Just at the stroke, when my veins start and
spread, 55
Set on my soul an everlasting head!
Then am I ready, like a palmer fit,
To tread those blest paths which before I
writ.

Of death and judgment, heaven and hell,
Who oft doth think, must needs die well. 60
About 1603.

VERSES FOUND IN HIS BIBLE
IN THE GATE-HOUSE AT
WESTMINSTER

According to tradition, Raleigh wrote this poem the night before his execution.

Even such is time, that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,

¹ sweetmeats.
² A pun on angel, an old English coin that bore the head of the archangel Michael.

And pays us but with earth and dust;
 Who, in the dark and silent grave,
 When we have wandered all our ways,
 Shuts up the story of our days;
 But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
 My God shall raise me up, I trust!

THE LIE

Go, Soul, the body's guest
 Upon a thankless arrant;¹
 Fear not to touch the best;
 The truth shall be thy warrant:
 Go, since I needs must die,
 And give the world the lie. 5

Say to the court, it glows
 And shines like rotten wood;
 Say to the church, it shows
 What's good, and doth no good: 10
 If court and church reply,
 Then give them both the lie.

Tell potentates, they live
 Acting by others' action;
 Not loved unless they give, 15
 Not strong but by a faction:
 If potentates reply,
 Give potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition,
 That manage the estate,² 20
 Their purpose is ambition,
 Their practice only hate;
 And if they once reply,
 Then give them all the lie.

Tell them that brave it most, 25
 They beg for more by spending,
 Who, in their greatest cost,
 Seek nothing but commending:
 And if they make reply,
 Then give them all the lie. 30

Tell zeal it wants devotion;
 Tell love it is but lust;
 Tell time it is but motion;
 Tell flesh it is but dust: 35
 And wish them not reply,
 For thou must give the lie.

Tell age it daily wasteth;
 Tell honour how it alters;
 Tell beauty how she blasteth;
 Tell favour how it falters: 40
 And as they shall reply,
 Give every one the lie.

Tell wit how much it wrangles
 In tickle¹ points of niceness;
 Tell wisdom she entangles 45
 Herself in over-wiseness:
 And when they do reply,
 Straight give them both the lie.

Tell physic of her boldness;
 Tell skill it is pretension; 50
 Tell charity of coldness;
 Tell law it is contention:
 And as they do reply,
 So give them still the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness; 55
 Tell nature of decay;
 Tell friendship of unkindness;
 Tell justice of delay:
 And if they will reply,
 Then give them all the lie. 60

Tell arts they have no soundness,
 But vary by esteeming;
 Tell schools they want profoundness,
 And stand too much on seeming: 65
 If arts and schools reply,
 Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it's fled the city;
 Tell how the country erreth;
 Tell manhood shakes off pity;
 Tell virtue least preferreth: 70
 And if they do reply,
 Spare not to give the lie.

So when thou hast, as I
 Commanded thee, done blabbing, —
 Although to give the lie 75
 Deserves no less than stabbing, —
 Stab at thee he that will,
No stab the soul can kill.

From THE DISCOVERY OF
GUIANA

After we departed from the port of these
 Ciawani, we passed up the river with the
 flood, and anchored the ebb; and in this sort
 we went onward. The third day that we
 entered the river our galley came on ground,
 and stuck so fast, as we thought that even
 there our discovery had ended, and that we
 must have left sixty of our men to have in-
 habited, like rooks upon trees, with those
 nations: but the next morning, after we had
 cast out all her ballast, with tugging and

1 errand. 2 state.

1 unsteady.

hauling to and fro, we got her afloat, and went on: at four days' end we fell into as goodly a river as ever I beheld, which was called the great Amana, which ran more directly without windings and turnings than the other: but soon after, the flood of the sea left us, and we enforced either by main strength to row against a violent current, or to return as wise as we went out. We had then no shift but to persuade the companies that it was but two or three days' work, and therefore desired them to take pains, every gentleman and others taking their turns to row, and to spell one the other at the hour's end. Every day we passed by goodly branches of rivers, some falling from the west, others from the east, into Amana; but those I leave to the description in the chart of discovery, where every one shall be named with his rising and descent. When three days more were overgone, our companies began to despair, the weather being extreme hot, the river bordered with very high trees that kept away the air, and the current against us every day stronger than other: but we evermore commanded our pilots to promise an end the next day, and used it so long as we were driven to assure them from four reaches of the river to three, and so to two, and so to the next reach; ¹ but so long we labored as many days were spent, and so driven to draw ourselves to harder allowance, our bread even at the last, and no drink at all; and our men and ourselves so wearied and scorched, and doubtful withal whether we should ever perform it or no, the heat increasing as we drew towards the line; for we were now in five degrees.

The further we went on, (our victual decreasing, and the air breeding great faintness,) we grew weaker and weaker, when we had most need of strength and ability; for hourly the river ran more violently than other against us, and the barge, wherries, and ship's boat of captain Gifford and captain Calfield had spent all their provisions, so as we were brought into despair and discomfort, had we not persuaded all the company that it was but only one day's work more to attain the land, where we should be relieved of all we wanted; and if we returned, that we were sure to starve by the way, and that the world would also laugh us to scorn. On the banks of these rivers were divers sorts of fruits good to eat, flowers and trees of that variety as were sufficient to make ten volumes of herbals.² We relieved ourselves

many times with the fruits of the country, and sometimes with fowl and fish: we saw birds of all colors, some carnation, some crimson, orange tawny, purple, green, watchet,¹ and of all other sorts, both simple and mixed; as it was unto us a great good passing of the time to behold them, besides the relief we found by killing some store of them with our fowling pieces, without which, having little or no bread, and less drink, but only the thick and troubled water of the river, we had been in a very hard case.

Our old pilot of the Ciawani (whom, as I said before, we took to redeem Ferdinando²) told us, that if we would enter a branch of a river on the right hand with our barge and wherries, and leave the galley at anchor the while in the great river, he would bring us to a town of the Arwacas, where we should find store of bread, hens, fish and of the country wine, and persuaded us, that departing from the galley at noon, we might return ere night. I was very glad to hear this speech, and presently took my barge, with eight musketeers, captain Gifford's wherry, with himself and four musketeers, and captain Calfield with his wherry and as many, and so we entered the mouth of this river; and because we were persuaded that it was so near, we took no victual with us at all. When we had rowed three hours, we marvelled we saw no sign of any dwelling, and asked the pilot where the town was; he told us a little further. After three hours more, the sun being almost set, we began to suspect that he led us that way to betray us, for he confessed that those Spaniards which fled from Trinedado, and also those that remained with Carapana in Emeria, were joined together in some village upon that river. But when it grew towards night, and we demanding where the place was, he told us but four reaches more: when we had rowed four and four we saw no sign, and our poor watermen, even heart-broken and tired, were ready to give up the ghost; for we had now come from the galley near forty miles.

At the last we determined to hang the pilot, and, if we had well known the way back again by night, he had surely gone; but our own necessities pleaded sufficiently for his safety: for it was as dark as pitch, and the river began so to narrow itself, and the trees to hang over from side to side, as we were driven with arming swords to cut a passage through those branches that covered the

¹ light blue.

² Raleigh's Indian pilot, who had been captured a short time before by a hostile tribe.

¹ straight section of a river.

² books about plants.

water. We were very desirous to find this town, hoping of a feast, because we made but a short breakfast aboard the galley in the morning, and it was now eight o'clock at night, and our stomachs began to gnaw apace; but whether it was best to return or go on we began to doubt, suspecting treason in the pilot more and more; but the poor old Indian ever assured us that it was but a little further, and but this one turning and that turning; and at last, about one o'clock after midnight, we saw a light, and rowing towards it we heard the dogs of the village. When we landed, we found few people; for the lord of that place was gone with divers canoes above four hundred miles off, upon a journey towards the head of Oroonoko, to trade for gold, and to buy women of the cannibals, who afterward unfortunately passed by us, as we rode at an anchor in the port of Morequito, in the dark of night, and yet came so near us, as his canoes grated against our barges. He left one of his company at the port of Morequito, by whom we understood that he had brought thirty young women, divers plates of gold, and had great store of fine pieces of cotton cloth and cotton beds. In his house we had good store of bread, fish, hens, and Indian drink, and so rested that night; and in the morning, after we had traded with such of his people as came down, we returned towards our galley, and brought with us some quantity of bread, fish, and hens.

On both sides of this river we passed the most beautiful country that ever mine eyes beheld; and whereas all that we had seen before was nothing but woods, prickles, bushes, and thorns, here we beheld plains of twenty miles in length, the grass short and green, and in divers parts groves of trees by themselves, as if they had been by all the art and labor in the world so made of purpose: and still as we rowed, the deer came down feeding by the water's side, as if they had been used to a keeper's call. Upon this river there were great store of fowl, and of many sorts: we saw in it divers sorts of strange fishes, and of marvellous bigness; but for lagartos¹ it exceeded; for there were thousands of those ugly serpents, and the people call it for the abundance of them the river of Lagartos, in their language. I had a negro, a very proper young fellow, that, leaping out of the galley to swim in the mouth of this river, was in all our sights taken and devoured with one of those lagartos. In the

¹ lizards; here, alligators.

meanwhile our companies in the galley thought we had been all lost, (for we promised to return before night,) and sent the Lion's Whelp's ship's boat with captain Whiddon to follow us up the river; but the next day, after we had rowed up and down some fourscore miles, we returned, and went on our way up the great river, and, when we were even at the last cast for want of victuals, captain Gifford being before the galley and the rest of the boats, seeking out some place to land upon the banks to make fire, espied four canoes coming down the river, and with no small joy caused his men to try the uttermost of their strengths, and after a while two of the four gave over, and ran themselves ashore, every man betaking himself to the fastness of the woods; the two other lesser got away while he landed to lay hold of these, and so turned into some by-creek, we knew not whither: those canoes that were taken were loaden with bread, and were bound for Marguerita in the West Indies, which those Indians, called Arwacas, proposed to carry thither for exchange: but in the lesser there were three Spaniards, who having heard of the defeat of their governor in Trinedado, and that we purposed to enter Guiana, came away in those canoes: one of them was a cavalero, as the captain of the Arwacas after told us, another a soldier, and the third a refiner.

In the meantime nothing on the earth could have been more welcome to us, next unto gold, than the great store of very excellent bread which we found in these canoes; for now our men cried, Let us go on, we care not how far. After that Captain Gifford had brought the two canoes to the galley, I took my barge, and went to the bank's side with a dozen shot, where the canoes first ran themselves ashore, and landed there, sending out captain Gifford and captain Thyn on one hand, and captain Calfield on the other, to follow those that were fled into the woods; and as I was creeping through the bushes I saw an Indian basket hidden, which was the refiner's basket; for I found in it his quicksilver, saltpetre, and divers things for the trial of metals, and also the dust of such ore as he had refined; but in those canoes which escaped there was a good quantity of ore and gold.

From THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

The following extract is the conclusion of the *History*, with its famous last paragraph. It was

written in the Tower between 1607 and 1614, and published in 1614, while Raleigh was still in prison. Raleigh planned two more volumes, which were never completed. The one volume that he finished ends with the foundation of the Roman Empire.

For the rest, if we seek a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundless ambition in mortal men, we may add to that which hath been already said, that the kings and princes of the world have always laid before them the actions, but not the ends, of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glory of the one, but they never mind the misery of the other, till they find the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of God, while they enjoy life, or hope it; but they follow the counsel of Death upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word, which God, with all the words of his law, promises, or threats, doth not infuse. Death, which hateth and destroyeth man is believed; God, which hath made him and loves him, is always deferred. *I have considered, saith Solomon, all the works that are under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.* But who believes it, till Death tells us? It was Death which, opening the conscience of Charles the Fifth, made

him enjoin his son Philip to restore Navarre; and king Francis the First of France, to command that justice should be done upon the murderers of the Protestants in Merindol and Cabrieres, which till then he neglected. It is therefore Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are but abjects and humbles them at the instant, makes them cry, complain, and repent, yea, even to hate their forepast happiness. He takes the account of the rich and proves him a beggar, a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness, and they acknowledge it.

O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet!*

[Here follows a paragraph announcing the second and third volumes. Raleigh's "first volume" comprises six modern octavo volumes.]

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586)

Sidney, like Raleigh, a splendid Elizabethan gentleman, came of an excellent family, was educated at Oxford, and soon thereafter became a courtier and diplomat under Elizabeth. In a short and busy life he produced *Astrophel and Stella*, a sonnet sequence addressed to his beloved, Penelope Devereux; *Arcadia*, a romance, written for his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, which set a new style in prose writing; and *The Defense of Poesy*, a beautifully written appreciation of poetry. His accomplishment in literature merits Arthur Symonds' enthusiastic praise: "It is in Sidney that we find the true beginning in England of the novel, of literary criticism, of the sonnet, and of the lyric."

His chivalric death on the field of Zutphen in the Low Countries is commemorated in the biography written by Fulke Greville in 1652. Spenser, who had dedicated his *Faerie Queene* to Sidney, mourned the death of his friend in a series of sonnets, *Astrophel*.

For the life of Sidney, see J. A. Symonds (English Men of Letters), and Greville (Oxford University Press). John Drinkwater has edited the poems (Dutton); and A. Feuillerat, the complete works, in two volumes (Cambridge University Press). The best edition of *The Defense of Poesy* is A. S. Cook's (Ginn).

THE BARGAIN

This poem first appeared in Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy*, 1589. Another version is incorporated in the *Arcadia*, 1590.

My true love hath my heart, and I have his,

By just exchange one for another given:

I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,

There never was a better bargain driven:

My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,

My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:

He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
 I cherish his because in me it bides:
 My true love hath my heart, and I have
 his. 10

ASTROPHEL AND STELLA

I

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to
 show,
 That she, dear she, might take some pleasure
 of my pain,
 Pleasure might cause her read, reading might
 make her know,
 Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace
 obtain,
 I sought fit words to paint the blackest face
 of woe; 5
 Studying inventions fine, her wits to enter-
 tain,
 Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence
 would flow
 Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my
 sun-burned brain.
 But words came halting forth, wanting In-
 vention's stay;
 Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame
 Study's blows; 10
 And others' feet still seemed but strangers in
 my way.
 Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless
 in my throes,
 Biting my truant pen, beating myself for
 spite,
 Fool, said my Muse to me, look in thy heart,
 and write.

31

With now sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st
 the skies!
 How silently, and with how wan a face!
 What, may it be that even in heavenly place
 That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
 Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted
 eyes 5
 Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
 I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace,
 To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.
 Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
 Is constant love deemed there but want of
 wit? 10
 Are beauties there as proud as here they
 be?
 Do they above love to be loved, and yet
 Those lovers scorn whom that love doth
 possess?
 Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

39

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of
peace,
 The balm-place of wit, the balm of woe,
 The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
 Th' indifferent judge between the high and
 low;
 With shield of proof shield me from out the
 prease 1
 Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth
 throw; 5
 Make in me those civil wars to cease;
 I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
 Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest
 bed,
 A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light, 10
 A rosy garland and a weary head;
 And if these things, as being thine in right,
 Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
 Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

41

Having this day my horse, my hand, my
 lance
 Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
 Both by the judgment of the English eyes
 And of some sent from that sweet enemy,
 France;
 Horsemen my skill in horsemanship ad-
 vance, 2
 Townfolks my strength; a daintier judge
 applies 5
 His praise to sleight, 3 which from good use 4
 doth rise;
 Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
 Others, because of both sides I do take
 My blood from them who did excel in
 this, 10
 Think Nature me a man-of-arms did make.
 How far they shot awry! the true cause is,
 Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face
 Sent forth the beams which made so fair my
 race.

64

No more, my dear, no more these counsels
 try;
 O give my passions leave to run their race;
 Let Fortune lay on me her worst disgrace;
 Let folk o'ercharged with brain against me
 cry;
 Let clouds bedim my face, break in mine
 eye; 5
 Let me no steps but of lost labor trace;
 Let all the earth with scorn recount my
 case, —
 But do not will me from my love to fly.

1 press.

2 praise.

3 dexterity.

4 habit.

I do not envy Aristotle's wit,
 Nor do aspire to Cæsar's bleeding fame;¹ 10
 Nor aught do care though some above me sit;
 Nor hope nor wish another course to frame,
 But that which once may win thy cruel
 heart:
 Thou art my wit, and thou my virtue art.

66

And do I see some cause a hope to feed,
 Or doth the tedious burden of long woe
 In weakened minds quick apprehending
 breed
 Of every image which may comfort show?
 I cannot brag of word, much less of deed, 5
 Fortune wheels still with me in one sort,² slow;
 My wealth no more, and no whit less my
 need;
 Desire still on stilts of fear doth go.
 And yet amid all fears a hope there is,
 Stolen to my heart since last fair night, nay
 day, 10
 Stella's eyes sent to me the beams of bliss,
 Looking on me while I looked other way:
 But when mine eyes back to their heaven did
 move,
 They fled with blush which guilty seemed of
 love.

107

Stella, since thou so right a princess art
 Of all the powers which life bestows on me,
 That ere by them ought³ undertaken be,
 They first resort unto that sovereign part;
 Sweet, for a while give respite to my heart, 5
 Which pants as though it still should leap to
 thee:
 And on my thoughts give thy lieutenantancy
 To this great cause, which needs both use and
 art.
 And as a queen, who from her presence sends
 Whom she employs, dismiss from thee my
 wit, 10
 Till it have wrought what thy own will
 attends,
 On servants' shame oft masters' blame doth
 sit:
 O let not fools in me thy works reprove,
 And scorning say, "See what it is to love!"

LOVE IS DEAD

Ring out your bells, let mourning shows be
 spread;
 For Love is dead:
 All Love is dead, infected

¹ Reference to Cæsar's assassination.
² manner. ³ aught.

With plague of deep disdain:
 Worth, as nought worth, rejected, 5
 And Faith fair scorn doth gain.
 From so ungrateful fancy,
 From such a female frenzy,
 From them that use men thus,
 Good Lord, deliver us! 10

Weep, neighbours, weep; do you not hear it
 said
 That Love is dead?
 His death-bed, peacock's folly;
 His winding-sheet is shame;
 His will, false-seeming wholly; 15
 His sole executor, blame.
 From so ungrateful fancy,
 From such a female frenzy,
 From them that use men thus,
 Good Lord, deliver us! 20

Let dirge be sung, and trentals¹ rightly read,
 For Love is dead;
 Sir Wrong his tomb ordaineth
 My mistress' marble heart;
 Which epitaph containeth, 25
 "Her eyes were once his dart."
 From so ungrateful fancy,
 From such a female frenzy,
 From them that use men thus,
 Good Lord, deliver us! 30

Alas, I lie: rage hath this error bred;
 Love is not dead;
 Love is not dead, but sleepeth
 In her unmatched mind,
 Where she his counsel keepeth, 35
 Till due desert she find.
 Therefore from so vile fancy,
 To call such wit a frenzy,
 Who Love can temper thus,
 Good Lord, deliver us! 40

From THE DEFENSE OF POETRY

This extract is from the middle of Sidney's essay, following his arguments for placing poetry foremost among human studies. The essay, written about 1581 and published in 1595 in two editions (one called *Defense*, the other *Apology*), was an answer to the direct and indirect attacks of the Puritans against poetry. The immediate cause was an invective against poets, *The School of Abuse*, 1579, by Stephen Gosson, dedicated, strangely enough, to Sidney. Sidney's answer is a general reply, carefully considered, philosophic, and in good taste. The text given below is a modernized version by

¹ thirty masses for the dead.

Professor A. S. Cook based upon both early editions.

I conclude, therefore, that he [the poet] excelleth history, not only in furnishing the mind with knowledge, but in setting it forward to that which deserveth to be called and accounted good; which setting forward, and moving to well-doing, indeed setteth the laurel crown upon the poet as victorious, not only of the historian, but over the philosopher, howsoever in teaching it may be questionable. For suppose it be granted — that which I suppose with great reason may be denied — that the philosopher, in respect of his methodical proceeding, teach more perfectly than the poet, yet do I think that no man is so much φιλοφιλόσοφος¹ as to compare the philosopher in moving with the poet. And that moving is of a higher degree than teaching, it may by this appear, that it is well nigh both the cause and the effect of teaching; for who will be taught, if he be not moved with desire to be taught? And what so much good doth that teaching bring forth — I speak still of moral doctrine — as that it moveth one to do that which it doth teach? For, as Aristotle saith, it is not γνῶσις² but πράξις³ must be the fruit; and how πράξις cannot be, without being moved to practise, it is no hard matter to consider. The philosopher sheweth you the way, he informeth you of the particularities, as well of the tediousness of the way, as of the pleasant lodging you shall have when your journey is ended, as of the many by-turnings that may divert you from your way; but this is to no man but to him that will read him, and read him with attentive, studious painfulness; which constant desire whosoever hath in him, hath already passed half the hardness of the way, and therefore is beholding to the philosopher but for the other half. Nay, truly, learned men have learnedly thought, that where once reason hath so much overmastered passion as that the mind hath a free desire to do well, the inward light each mind hath in itself is as good as a philosopher's book; since in nature we know it is well to do well, and what is well and what is evil, although not in the words of art which philosophers bestow upon us; for out of natural conceit the philosophers drew it. But to be moved to do that which we know, or to be moved with desire to know, *hoc opus, hic labor est.*⁴

Now therein of all sciences — I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit — is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margent¹ with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness. But he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of music: and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner, and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste, — which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of the aloes or rhubarb they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth. So is it in men, most of which are childish in the best things, till they be cradled in their graves, — glad they will be to hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, Æneas: and, hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valor, and justice; which, if they had been barely, that is to say philosophically, set out, they would swear they be brought to school again.

That imitation whereof poetry is, hath the most conveniency to nature of all other; insomuch that, as Aristotle saith, those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made in poetical imitation delightful. Truly, I have known men, that even with reading Amadis de Gaule, which, God knoweth, wanteth much of a perfect poesy, have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy, liberality, and especially courage. Who readeth Æneas carrying old Anchises on his back, that wisheth not it were his fortune to perform so excellent an act? Whom do not those words of Turnus move, the tale of Turnus having planted his image in the imagination?

Fugientem hæc terra videbit?

Usque adeone mori miserum est?²

55

¹ *philophilosophos*, friend of the philosopher.

² *gnosis*, knowledge. ³ *praxis*, practice.

⁴ This is the work, this the task.

¹ margin.

² Will this land see me flee? Is it so very unhappy to die?

Where the philosophers, as they scorn to delight, so must they be content little to move — saving wrangling whether virtue be the chief or the only good, whether the contemplative or the active life do excel — which Plato and Boethius well knew, and therefore made Mistress Philosophy very often borrow the masking raiment of Poesy. For even those hard-hearted evil men who think virtue a school-name, and know no other good but *indulgere genio*,¹ and therefore despise the austere admonitions of the philosopher, and feel not the inward reason they stand upon, yet will be content to be delighted, which is all the good-fellow poet seemeth to promise; and so steal to see the form of goodness — which seen, they cannot but love — ere themselves be aware, as if they took a medicine of cherries.

Infinite proofs of the strange effects of this poetical invention might be alleged; only two shall serve, which are so often remembered as I think all men know them. The one of Menenius Agrippa, who, when the whole people of Rome had resolutely divided themselves from the senate, with apparent show of utter ruin, though he were, for that time, an excellent orator, came not among them upon trust either of figurative speeches or cunning insinuations, and much less with far-fetched maxims of philosophy, which, especially if they were Platonic, they must have learned geometry before they could well have conceived; but, forsooth, he behaves himself like a homely and familiar poet. He telleth them a tale, that there was a time when all the parts of the body made a mutinous conspiracy against the belly, which they thought devoured the fruits of each other's labor; they concluded they would let so unprofitable a spender starve. In the end, to be short — for the tale is notorious, and as notorious that it was a tale — with punishing the belly they plagued themselves. This, applied by him, wrought such effect in the people, as I never read that ever words brought forth but then so sudden and so good an alteration; for upon reasonable conditions a perfect reconciliation ensued.

The other is of Nathan³ the prophet, who, when the holy David had so far forsaken God as to confirm adultery with murder, when he was to do the tenderest office of a friend, in laying his own shame before his eyes, — sent by God to call again so chosen a servant, how doth he it but by telling of a man whose be-

loved lamb was ungratefully taken from his bosom? The application most divinely true, but the discourse itself feigned; which made David (I speak of the second and instrumental cause) as in a glass to see his own filthiness, as that heavenly Psalm of Mercy well testifieth.

By these, therefore, examples and reasons, I think it may be manifest that the poet, with that same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually than any other art doth. And so a conclusion not unfitly ensueth: that as virtue is the most excellent resting-place for all worldly learning to make his end of, so poetry, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princely to move towards it, in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman.

But I am content not only to decipher him by his works — although works in commendation or dispraise must ever hold a high authority — but more narrowly will examine his parts; so that, as in a man, though all together may carry a presence full of majesty and beauty, perchance in some one defectious piece we may find a blemish.

Now in his parts, kinds, or species, as you list to term them, it is to be noted that some poesies have coupled together two or three kinds, — as tragical and comical, whereupon is risen the *tragi-comical*; some, in the like manner, have mingled prose and verse, as Sannazzaro¹ and Boethius;² some have mingled matters heroical and pastoral; but that cometh all to one in this question, for, if severed they be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtful. Therefore, perchance forgetting some, and leaving some as needless to be remembered, it shall not be amiss in a word to cite the special kinds, to see what faults may be found in the right use of them.

Is it then the pastoral poem which is misliked? — for perchance where the hedge is lowest they will soonest leap over. Is the poor pipe disdained, which sometimes out of Melibæus'³ mouth can show the misery of people under hard lords and ravening soldiers, and again, by Tityrus,⁴ what blessedness is derived to them that lie lowest from the goodness of them that sit highest? sometimes, under the pretty tales of wolves and sheep, can include the whole considerations of wrong-doing and patience; sometimes show

¹ An Italian poet who wrote an *Arcadia*, 1504, which, like Sidney's romance, was in prose and verse.

² In his *Consolation of Philosophy*, written in prison about 522.

³ A character in Virgil's *First Eclogue*.

⁴ He and Melibæus carry on the dialogue in Virgil's poem.

¹ indulge your nature.

² far-fetched.

³ 2 Samuel, xii.

that contention for trifles can get but a trifling victory; where perchance a man may see that even Alexander and Darius, when they strave who should be cock of this world's dunghill, the benefit they got was that the after-livers may say:

Hæc memini et victum frustra contendere
Thyrsim;
Ex illo Corydon, Corydon est tempore nobis.¹

Or is it the lamenting elegiac, which in a kind heart would move rather pity than blame; who bewaileth, with the great philosopher Heraclitus,² the weakness of mankind and the wretchedness of the world; who surely is to be praised, either for compassionate accompanying just causes of lamentation, or for rightly painting out how weak be the passions of wofulness?

Is it the bitter but wholesome iambic, who rubs the galled mind, in making shame the trumpet of villainy with bold and open crying out against naughtiness?

Or the satiric? who

Omne vafer vitium ridenti tangit amico;³

who sportingly never leaveth till he make a man laugh at folly, and at length ashamed to laugh at himself, which he cannot avoid without avoiding the folly; who, while *circum præcordia ludii*,⁴ giveth us to feel how many headaches a passionate life bringeth us to, — how, when all is done,

Est Ulubris, animus si nos non deficit æquus.⁵

No, perchance it is the comic; whom naughty playmakers and stage-keepers have justly made odious. To the argument of abuse⁶ I will answer after. Only thus much now is to be said, that the comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one. Now, as in geometry the oblique must be known as well as the right, and in arithmetic the odd as well as the even;

so in the actions of our life who seeth not the filthiness of evil, wanteth a great foil to perceive the beauty of virtue. This doth the comedy handle so, in our private and domestic matters, as with hearing it we get, as it were, an experience what is to be looked for of a niggardly Demea, of a crafty Davus, of a flattering Gnatho, of a vain-glorious Thraso;¹ and not only to know what effects are to be expected, but to know who be such, by the signifying badge given them by the comedian. And little reason hath any man to say that men learn evil by seeing it so set out; since, as I said before, there is no man living, but by the force truth hath in nature, no sooner seeth these men play their parts, but wisheth them in *pistrinum*,² although perchance the sack of his own faults lie so behind his back, that he seeth not himself to dance the same measure, — whereto yet nothing can more open his eyes than to find his own actions contemptibly set forth.

So that the right use of comedy will, I think, by nobody be blamed, and much less of the high and excellent tragedy, that openeth the greatest wounds, and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humors; that with stirring the effects of admiration and commiseration teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded; that maketh us know:

Qui sceptræ sævus duro imperio regit,
Timet timentes, metus in auctorem redit.³

But how much it can move, Plutarch yieldeth a notable testimony of the abominable tyrant Alexander Pheræus; from whose eyes a tragedy, well made and represented, drew abundance of tears, who without all pity had murdered infinite numbers, and some of his own blood; so as he that was not ashamed to make matters for tragedies, yet could not resist the sweet violence of a tragedy. And if it wrought no further good in him, it was that he, in despite of himself, withdrew himself from hearkening to that which might mollify his hardened heart. But it is not the tragedy they do mislike, for it were too absurd to cast out so excellent a representation of whatsoever is most worthy to be learned.

¹ I remember this, and how defeated Thyrsis fought in vain. From that time on, it has been Corydon, Corydon with us. (Virgil's *Seventh Eclogue*.)

² The "weeping" philosopher, 535-475 B.C., who taught that all things are in a state of flux, and that knowledge can only be relative.

³ The rascal touches every fault, while making his friend laugh. (The quotation is abridged from Persius' *First Satire*.)

⁴ He plays around our deepest feelings. (From the next line in the quotation from Persius.)

⁵ Freely translated: we may even dwell in and enjoy Ulubris [a particularly desolate town], if we have tranquillity of spirit. (Horace's *First Epistle*.)

⁶ A reference to Gosson's pamphlet.

¹ These are stock characters in the plays of Terence, the Latin comic dramatist.

² in the work-mill.

³ The cruel ruler who governs harshly fears those who fear him, and fear comes over him who started it. (Seneca.)

Is it the lyric that most displeaseth, who with his tuned lyre and well-accorded voice, giveth praise, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts; who giveth moral precepts and natural problems; who sometimes raiseth up his voice to the height of the heavens, in singing the lauds of the immortal God? Certainly I must confess mine own barbarousness; I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas¹ that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style; which being so evil apparelled in the dust and cobwebs of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar? In Hungary I have seen it the manner at all feasts, and other such meetings, to have songs of their ancestors' valor, which that right soldier-like nation think the chiefest kindlers of brave courage. The incomparable Lacedæmonians did not only carry that kind of music ever with them to the field, but even at home, as such songs were made, so were they all content to be singers of them; when the lusty men were to tell what they did, the old men what they had done, and the young men what they would do. And where a man may say that Pindar many times praiseth highly victories of small moment, matters rather of sport than virtue; as it may be answered, it was the fault of the poet, and not of the poetry, so indeed the chief fault was in the time and custom of the Greeks, who set those toys at so high a price that Philip of Macedon reckoned a horserace won at Olympus² among his three fearful felicities.³ But as the unimitable Pindar often did, so is that kind most capable and most fit to awake the thoughts from the sleep of idleness, to embrace honorable enterprises.

There rests the heroical, whose very name, I think, should daunt all backbiters. For by what conceit can a tongue be directed to speak evil of that which draweth with it no less champions than Achilles, Cyrus, Æneas, Turnus, Tydeus, Rinaldo?⁴ who doth not only teach and move to a truth, but teacheth and moveth to the most high and excellent truth; who maketh magnanimity and justice shine through all misty fearfulness and foggy

¹ Probably in an older version than the one we have now. See p. 137 of this volume.

² A slip for Olympia.

³ Philip was informed at the same time of the victory of his army in battle, the winning of a race by his horse, and the birth of his famous son Alexander. See Plutarch's *Lives*.

⁴ The first three heroes are well enough known. Turnus appears near the end of the *Æneid*, Tydeus in the *Iliad*, and Rinaldo in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.

desires; who, if the saying of Plato and Tully¹ be true, that who could see virtue would be wonderfully ravished with the love of her beauty, this man setteth her out to make her more lovely, in her holiday apparel, to the eye of any that will deign not to disdain until they understand. But if anything be already said in the defense of sweet poetry, all concurreth to the maintaining the heroical, which is not only a kind, but the best and most accomplished kind of poetry. For, as the image of each action stirreth and instructeth the mind, so the lofty image of such worthies most inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy, and informs with counsel how to be worthy. Only let Æneas be worn in the tablet of your memory, how he governeth himself in the ruin of his country; in the preserving his old father, and carrying away his religious ceremonies; in obeying the god's commandment to leave Dido, though not only all passionate kindness, but even the human consideration of virtuous gratefulness, would have craved other of him; how in storms, how in sports, how in war, how in peace, how a fugitive, how victorious, how besieged, how besieging, how to strangers, how to allies, how to enemies, how to his own; lastly, how in his inward self, and how in his outward government; and I think, in a mind most prejudiced with a prejudicating humor, he will be found in excellency fruitful, — yea, even as Horace saith, *melius Chrysippo et Crantore*.² But truly I imagine it falleth out with these poet-whippers as with some good women who often are sick, but in faith they cannot tell where. So the name of poetry is odious to them, but neither his cause nor effects, neither the sum that contains him nor the particularities descending from him, give any fast handle to their carping dispraise.

Since, then, poetry is of all human learnings the most ancient and of most fatherly antiquity, as from whence other learnings have taken their beginnings; since it is so universal that no learned nation doth despise it, nor barbarous nation is without it; since both Roman and Greek gave divine names unto it, the one of "prophesying," the other of "making," and that indeed that name of "making" is fit for him, considering that whereas other arts retain themselves within their subject, and receive, as it were, their being from it, the poet only bringeth his own stuff, and doth not learn a conceit out of

¹ Cicero.

² Better than Chrysippus and Crantor. (They were two scholars contemporaneous with Horace.)

a matter, but maketh matter for a conceit; since neither his description nor his end containeth any evil, the thing described cannot be evil; since his effects be so good as to teach goodness, and delight the learners of it; since therein — namely in moral doctrine, the chief of all knowledges — he doth not only far pass the historian, but for instructing is well nigh comparable to the philosopher, and for moving leaveth him behind him; since the

Holy Scripture, wherein there is no uncleanness, hath whole parts in it poetical, and that even our Savior Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it; since all his kinds are not only in their united forms, but in their several dissections fully commendable; I think, and think I think rightly, the laurel crown appointed for triumphant captains doth worthily, of all other learnings, honor the poet's triumph.

ELIZABETHAN LYRICS

THOMAS SACKVILLE, LORD
BUCKHURST (1536-1608)

Thomas Sackville, first Earl of Dorset and Lord Buckhurst, was a prominent statesman, the holder of many important offices under Elizabeth. Early in his career, 1561, he wrote, with Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc, or, Ferrex and Porrex*, the first English tragedy in blank verse. In 1563 he contributed to *A Mirror for Magistrates* the *Induction* and *The Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham*. The *Mirror* was started ten years before as a collection of stories narrating the tragedy or fall of prominent Englishmen, after the manner of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum* or Lydgate's version of Boccaccio's stories, *The Fall of Princes*. These two contributions of Sackville's to the *Mirror* are by far the best in the collection. They are the only poems that Sackville published, but they show, in the opinion of most critics, the greatest technical skill and imagination since the days of Chaucer.

COMPLAINT OF THE DUKE
OF BUCKINGHAM

So long as fortune would permit the same,
I lived in rule and riches with the best,
And passed my time in honor and in fame,
That of mishap no fear was in my breast;
But false fortune, when I suspected least, 5
Did turn the wheel, and with a doleful fall
Hath me bereft of honor, life, and all.

Lo, what avails in riches floods that flows?
Though she so smiled, as all the world were his:
Even kings and cæsars biden fortune's
throws, 10
And simple sort must bear it as it is.
Take heed by me that blithed in baleful bliss:
My rule, my riches, royal blood and all,
When fortune frowned, the feller made my
fall.

For hard mishaps, that happens unto such 15
Whose wretched state erst¹ never felt no
change,

Agrieve them not in any part so much
As, their distress, to whom it is so strange
That all their lives, nay, passed pleasures
range,

Their sudden woe, that aye wield wealth at
will, 20

Algaes² their hearts more piercingly must
thrill.

For of my birth, my blood was of the best,
First born an earl, then duke by due descent;
To swing the sway in court among the rest,
Dame Fortune me her rule most largely
lent, 25

And kind with courage so my corpse had blent,
That lo, on whom but me did she most smile?
And whom but me, lo, did she most beguile?

Now hast thou heard the whole of my unhap,
My chance, my change, the cause of all my
care; 30

In wealth and woe, how fortune did me wrap,
With world at will, to win me to her snare.

Bid kings, bid cæsars, bid all states beware,
And tell them this from me that tried it true:
Who reckless rules, right soon may hap to
rue. 35

GEORGE GASCOIGNE
(1525?-1577)

Gascoigne came of a distinguished family, was a graduate of Cambridge University, and a courtier at the great Queen's court. As an author he ranks high among those lesser writers of the period whose work, distinguished in itself, is more important in the history of the development of some type. To the drama he

1 formerly.

2 always.

contributed *The Supposes*, 1566, which was a translation from Ariosto, and *Jocasta*, 1566, translated from Euripides. The first (*supposes* means *disguises*) is a type of play better known through *The Comedy of Errors*. *Jocasta* is a "tragedy of blood." Both are written in blank verse. His lyrics were gathered in a volume, *An Hundred Sundrie Flowres bound up in one Poesie*, in 1572. To the warm discussion of the time regarding the principles of English verse-making he contributed *Notes of Instruction*. In the field of satire he wrote *The Glasse of Government*, 1575, and *The Steele Glasse*, 1576. A "steale glasse" is a mirror made of polished steel.

PIERS PLOUGHMAN

(From *The Steel Glass*)

Behold him, priests, and though he stink of sweat,
Disdain him not: for shall I tell you what?
Such climb to heaven before the shaven crowns.

But how? forsooth with true humility.
Not that they hoard their grain when it is cheap,

Nor that they kill the calf to have the milk,

Nor that they set debate between their lords,

By earing¹ up the balks² that part their bounds:

Nor for because they can both crouch and creep

(The guilefulst men that ever God yet made)

When as they mean most mischief and deceit,

Nor that they can cry out on landlords loud,
And say they rack their rents an ace too high,

When they themselves do sell their landlord's lamb

For greater price than ewe was wont be worth.

(I see you, Piers, my glass was lately scoured.)

But for they feed with fruits of their great pains

Both king and knight and priests in cloister pent.

Therefore I say that sooner some of them
Shall scale the walls which lead us up to heaven,

Than cornfed beasts, whose belly is their God,

Although they preach of more perfection.

1 ploughing.

2 unploughed ridges between fields.

SIR EDWARD DYER

(1550?-1607)

Dyer was an Oxford man, courtier, and knight, the friend of most of the writers who received preferment from Queen Elizabeth. He is remembered now solely for the poem which follows. In his time he was rated high as a poet, but most of his poems have either been lost or remain at present unidentified.

MY MIND TO ME A KINGDOM IS

My mind to me a kingdom is,
Such present joys therein I find,
That it excels all other bliss
That earth affords or grows by kind:¹
Though much I want which most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

No princely pomp, no wealthy store,
No force to win the victory,
No wily wit to salve a sore,
No shape to feed a loving eye;
To none of these I yield as thrall:
For why? My mind doth serve for all.

I see how plenty [surfeits] oft,
And hasty climbers soon do fall;
I see that those which are aloft
Mishap doth threaten most of all;
They get with toil, they keep with fear:
Such cares my mind could never bear.

Content to live, this is my stay;
I seek no more than may suffice;
I press to bear no haughty sway;
Look, what I lack my mind supplies:
Lo, thus I triumph like a king,
Content with that my mind doth bring.

Some have too much, yet still do crave;
I little have, and seek no more;
They are but poor, though much they have,
And I am rich with little store:
They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
They lack, I leave; they pine, I live.

I laugh not at another's loss;
I grudge² not at another's pain;
No worldly waves my mind can toss;
My state at one doth still remain:
I fear no foe, I fawn no friend;
I loathe not life, nor dread my end.

1 nature.

2 grieve.

Some weigh their pleasure by their lust,
 Their wisdom by their rage of will;
 Their treasure is their only trust;
 A cloaked craft their store of skill: 40
 But all the pleasure that I find
 Is to maintain a quiet mind.

My wealth is health and perfect ease;
 My conscience clear my chief defence;
 I neither seek by bribes to please, 45
 Nor by deceit to breed offence:
 Thus do I live; thus will I die;
 Would all did so as well as I!

JOHN LYLY (1554?-1606)

John Lyly, dramatist and prose writer, was born about 1554 in Kent. He was educated at Oxford, and soon afterwards settled in London as a writer. His fame rests partly upon his positive achievement, but more upon the influence that his plays and his prose style exerted upon succeeding authors. Of his nine plays, *Campaspe*, 1581, *Sappho and Phao*, 1584, and *Endymion*, 1591, are the best. As their titles imply, they are on mythological subjects, loaded, however, with allegorical references to the court of Queen Elizabeth. This is particularly true of *Endymion*. These plays were not intended for an ordinary audience. They were usually performed at the court by the children of St. Paul's choir, or at night at the fashionable Blackfriars, the one theater within the city walls. Much of the charm of the plays is due to the songs. There are critics, however, who question Lyly's authorship of all the lyrics.

More popular and influential than the plays were his two prose romances, written during his first years in London: *Euphues*, the *Anatomy of Wit*, 1578, and *Euphues and his England*, 1580. The highly artificial style of *Euphues* immediately became the vogue, parodied by a few as by Shakespeare in parts of *Love's Labour's Lost*, but leaving, in the end, a definite mark upon Elizabethan style. Most striking among the characteristics of euphuism are the many references and veiled allusions to the classics and ancient history, elaborate alliteration, the extreme balance and cadence of sentences, puns, — in short, all species of "wit."

Lyly also had a hand in the Marprelate controversy, writing a pamphlet, *Pappe with an Hatchel*, 1589, in support of the Bishops. He was likewise a member of four Parliaments between 1589 and 1591; but at court he never rose as high as he hoped to. He died in 1606.

The complete works of Lyly have been edited with a life and notes, in three volumes, by R. W. Bond (Oxford University Press).

APELLES' SONG

(From *Campaspe*)

Cupid and my *Campaspe* played
 At cards for kisses; Cupid paid.
 He stakes his quiver, bows and arrows,
 His mother's doves and team of sparrows;
 Loses them too. Then down he throws 5
 The coral of his lip, the rose
 Growing on's cheek (but none knows how);
 With these, the crystal of his brow,
 And then the dimple of his chin;
 All these did my *Campaspe* win. 10
 At last he set her both his eyes;
 She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
 O Love, has she done this to thee?
 What shall, alas! become of me?

SPRING'S WELCOME

(From *Campaspe*)

What bird so sings, yet so does wail?
 O 'tis the ravished nightingale.
 "Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu," she cries,
 And still her woes at midnight rise.
 Brave prick-song! ¹ who is't now we hear? 5
 None but the lark so shrill and clear;
 Now at heaven's gates ² she claps her
 wings,
 The morn not waking till she sings.
 Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat
 Poor robin redbreast tunes his note! 10
 Hark how the jolly cuckoos sing,
 "Cuckoo," to welcome in the spring,
 "Cuckoo," to welcome in the spring!

GEORGE PEELE

(1558?-1598?)

The facts about Peele's life are scant. After graduating from Oxford in 1577, he went to London, where he earned a precarious living as an actor and a writer. He wrote much, gaining for himself a high position among the playwrights before Shakespeare, especially for his excellent blank verse, his genuine humor, and the realism that he introduced into the drama, even when the subject was romantic. Most of his lyrics exhibit the same exuberance that is found in his plays. Among the best of the latter are *The Arraignment of Paris*, 1584, *The Old Wives Tale*, 1595, and *David and Bethsabe*, 1599. (The dates are those of publication.)

Peele's collected works have been edited by A. H. Bullen in two volumes, 1888.

¹ song written in parts.

² Compare this with Shakespeare's song in *Cymbeline*.

SONG

(From *The Arraignment of Paris*)

Enone. Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be;
The fairest shepherd on our green,
A love for any lady.

Paris. Fair and fair, and twice so fair, 5
As fair as any may be;
Thy love is fair for thee alone,
And for no other lady.

Æn. My love is fair, my love is gay,
As fresh as bin the flowers in May, 10
And of my love my roundelay,
My merry, merry roundelay,
Concludes with Cupid's curse:
"They that do change old love for new,
Pray gods they change for worse!" 15

*Ambo simul.*¹ They that do change, etc.

Æn. My love can pipe, my love can sing,

My love can many a pretty thing,
And of his lovely praises ring 20
My merry, merry roundelays,
Amen to Cupid's curse:
"They that do change," etc.
Ambo. They that do change, etc.

HARVESTMEN A-SINGING

(From *The Old Wives' Tale*)²

All ye that lovely lovers be,
Pray you for me.
Lo, here we come a-sowing, a-sowing,
And sow sweet fruits of love;
In your sweet hearts well may it prove! 5

Lo, here we come a-reaping, a-reaping,
To reap our harvest-fruit!
And thus we pass the year so long,
And never be we mute.

FAREWELL TO ARMS

His golden locks time hath to silver turned;
O time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
But spurned in vain; youth waneth by increasing:
Beauty, strength, youth are flowers but fading seen; 5
Duty, faith, love are roots, and ever green.

¹ Both together.² The first stanza is sung when the harvestmen enter; the second, at the end of their scene, when they make their exit.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees,
And, lovers' sonnets turned to holy psalms,
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
And feed on prayers, which are age his 10
alms:
But though from court to cottage he depart,
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song:
"Blessed be the hearts that wish my sovereign well, 15
Cursed be the souls that think her any wrong."
Goddess, allow this aged man his right,
To be your beadsman now that was your knight.

ROBERT GREENE

(1560?-1592)

Greene was a Cambridge man, who became a member of the madcap literary crew in London, leading a careless, tavern life, while turning out plays, miscellaneous prose works, and poems. Of his plays, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, a companion piece to, perhaps a parody of, Marlowe's *Faustus*, is the best. Among his prose works, most striking are *Pandosto* (the source of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*), *Menaphon*, and his last pamphlet, *A Groat's-worth of Wit, bought with a Million of Repentance*. His lyrics, introduced here and there in his prose writings, are among the best of the Elizabethan era.

SONG

(From *The Farewell to Folly*)

Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown:
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss, 5
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbors quiet rest;
The cottage that affords no pride nor care;
The mean that 'grees with country music best;

The sweet consort of mirth and music's
fare: 10
Obscured life sets down a type of bliss;
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

PHILOMELA'S ODE

Sitting by a river's side,
Where a silent stream did glide,
Muse I did of many things,
That the mind in quiet brings.
I 'gan think how some men deem 5
Gold their god; and some esteem
Honor is the chief content
That to man in life is lent.
And some others do contend,
Quiet none like to a friend. 10
Others hold there is no wealth
Compared to a perfect health.
Some man's mind in quiet stands,
When he is lord of many lands.
But I did sigh, and said all this 15
Was but a shade of perfect bliss;
And in my thoughts I did approve,¹
Nought so sweet as is true love.
Love 'twixt lovers passeth these,
When mouth kisseth and heart 'grees, 20
With folded arms and lips meeting,
Each soul another sweetly greeting;
For by the breath the soul fleeteth,
And soul with soul in kissing meeteth.
If love be so sweet a thing, 25
That such happy bliss doth bring,
Happy is love's sugared thrall,
But unhappy maidens all,
Who esteem your virgin blisses
Sweeter than a wife's sweet kisses. 30
No such quiet to the mind
As true Love with kisses kind;
But if a kiss prove unchaste,
Then is true love quite disgraced.
Though love be sweet, learn this of me, 35
No sweet love but honesty.

SEPHESTIA'S SONG TO HER CHILD

(From *Menaphon*)

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for
thee.

Mother's wag, pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy;
When thy father first did see 5
Such a boy by him and me,
He was glad, I was woe,

1 prove.

Fortune changed made him so,
When he left his pretty boy,
Last his sorrow, first his joy. 10

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for
thee.

Streaming tears that never stint,
Like pearl drops from a flint,
Fell by course from his eyes, 15
That one another's¹ place supplies;
Thus he grieved in every part,
Tears of blood fell from his heart,
When he left his pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy. 20

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my
knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for
thee.

The wanton smiled, father wept,
Mother cried, baby leapt;
More he crowed, more he cried, 25
Nature could not sorrow hide:
He must go, he must kiss
Child and mother, baby bless,
For he left his pretty boy,
Father's sorrow, father's joy. 30

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for
thee.

MENAPHON'S SONG

(From *Menaphon*)

Some say Love,
Foolish Love,
Doth rule and govern all the gods:
I say Love,
Inconstant Love, 5
Sets men's senses far at odds.
Some swear Love,
Smooth-faced Love,
Is sweetest sweet that men can have:
I say Love, 10
Sour Love,
Makes virtue yield as beauty's slave.
A bitter sweet, a folly worst of all,
That forceth wisdom to be folly's thrall.

Love is sweet, 15
Wherein sweet?
In fading pleasures that do pain.
Beauty sweet:
Is that sweet
That yieldeth sorrow for a gain? 20

1 Referring to tears.

If Love's sweet,
 Herein sweet,
 That minute's joys are monthly woes:
 'Tis not sweet,
 That is sweet 25
 Nowhere but where repentance grows.
 Then love who list, if beauty be so sour;
 Labor for me, Love rest in prince's bower.

THE SHEPHERD'S WIFE'S SONG

(From *Menaphon*)

Ah, what is love? It is a pretty thing,
 As sweet unto a shepherd as a king;
 And sweeter too:
 For kings have cares that wait upon a crown,
 And cares can make the sweetest love to
 frown. 5
 Ah then, ah then,
 If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
 What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

His flocks are folded, he comes home at night,
 As merry as a king in his delight; 10
 And merrier too:
 For kings bethink then what the state re-
 quire,
 Where shepherds careless carol by the fire.
 Ah then, ah then,
 If country loves such sweet desires do gain, 15
 What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

He kisseth first, then sits as blithe to eat
 His cream and curds as doth the king his
 meat;
 And blither too:
 For kings have often fears when they do
 sup, 20
 Where shepherds dread no poison in their
 cup.
 Ah then, ah then,
 If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
 What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

To bed he goes, as wanton then, I ween, 25
 As is a king in dalliance with a queen;
 More wanton too:
 For kings have many griefs affects¹ to move,
 Where shepherds have no greater grief than
 love.

 Ah then, ah then, 30
 If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
 What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

Upon his couch of straw he sleeps as sound
 As doth the king upon his bed of down;

¹ affections.

More sounder too: 35
 For cares cause kings full oft their sleep to
 spill,¹
 Where weary shepherds lie and snort² their
 fill.

 Ah then, ah then,
 If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
 What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

Thus with his wife he spends the year as
 blithe 41
 As doth the king at every tide or sithe;³
 And blither too:

For kings have wars and broils to take in hand,
 Where shepherds laugh and love upon the
 land. 45

 Ah then, ah then,
 If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
 What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

ANONYMOUS

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH

(From *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 1599)

Crabbed Age and Youth
 Cannot live together:
 Youth is full of pleasure,
 Age is full of care;
 Youth like summer morn, 5
 Age like winter weather;
 Youth like summer brave,
 Age like winter bare.
 Youth is full of sport,
 Age's breath is short; 10
 Youth is nimble, Age is lame;
 Youth is hot and bold,
 Age is weak and cold;
 Youth is wild, and Age is tame.
 Age, I do abhor thee; 15
 O, my Love, my Love is young!
 Age, I do defy thee:
 O, sweet shepherd, hie thee!
 For methinks thou stay'st too long.

HEY NONNY NO!

Hey nonny no!
 Men are fools that wish to die!
 Is't not fine to dance and sing,
 When the bells of death do ring?
 Is't not fine to swim in wine, 5
 And turn upon the toe,
 And sing hey nonny no,
 When the winds blow and the seas flow?
 Hey nonny no!

¹ kill.

² snore.

³ occasion.

BACK AND SIDE, GO BARE, GO BARE

(From *Gammer Gurton's Needle*)—

Back and side, go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold;
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good;
But, sure, I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I am nothing a-cold;
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

I love no roast, but a nut-brown toast,
And a crab¹ laid in the fire;
A little bread shall do me stead,
Much bread I not desire.
No frost nor snow, no wind, I trow,
Can hurt me if i[t] would,
I am so wrapt and throughly lapt
Of jolly good ale and old.

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

And Tib, my wife, that as her life
Loveth well good ale to seek,
Full oft drinks she till ye may see
The tears run down her cheek;
Then doth she trowl² to me the bowl,
Even as malt-worm³ should,
And saith, "Sweetheart, I took my part
Of this jolly good ale and old."

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

Now let them drink till they nod and
wink,
Even as good fellows should do;
They shall not miss to have the bliss
Good ale doth bring men to.
And all poor souls that have scoured⁴
bowls,
Or have them lustily trowled,
God save the lives of them and their
wives,
Whether they be young or old.

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

¹ apple. ² pass. ³ toper.
⁴ worn smooth.

SAMUEL DANIEL (1562-1619)

Daniel, a court poet, reached his highest achievement in his *Epistles* and his series of sonnets to *Delia*, in which he followed the tradition of Petrarch, Marot and the French *Pléiade* of writing a "sonnet-sequence" to his beloved. Some of his sonnets show unusual skill, but they fall short of the sequences written by Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare. His *History of the Civil Wars between York and Lancaster*, 1604, is a very long, matter-of-fact account of the Wars of the Roses. To the contemporary discussion about English versification Daniel contributed an essay, *A Defense of Rhyme*, 1603.

LOVE IS A SICKNESS

Love is a sickness full of woes,
All remedies refusing;
A plant that with most cutting grows,
Most barren with best using.

Why so?
More we enjoy it, more it dies;
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries —
Heigh ho!

Love is a torment of the mind,
A tempest everlasting;
And Jove hath made it of a kind
Not well, nor full nor fasting.

Why so?
More we enjoy it, more it dies;
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries —
Heigh ho!

TO THE LADY MARGARET, COUNTESS OF CUMBERLAND

He that of such a height hath built his mind,
And reared the dwelling of his thoughts so
strong,

As neither fear nor hope can shake the frame
Of his resolved powers; nor all the wind
Of vanity or malice pierce to wrong
His settled peace, or to disturb the same,
What a fair seat hath he, from whence he
may
The boundless wastes and wilds of man
survey!

And with how free an eye doth he look down
Upon these lower regions of turmoil!
Where all the storms of passion mainly beat
On flesh and blood; where honor, power,
renown

Are only gay afflictions, golden toil;
Where greatness stands upon as feeble feet

As frailty doth, and only great doth seem 15
To little minds, who do it so esteeme.

He looks upon the mightiest monarch's wars
But only as on stately robberies;
Where evermore the fortune that prevails
Must be the right: the ill-succeeding mars 20
The fairest and the best-faced enterprise.
Great pirate Pompey lesser pirates quails:
Justice, he sees, (as if seduced) still
Conspires with power, whose cause must not
be ill.

He sees the face of right t' appear as mani-
fold 25
As are the passions of uncertain man;
Who puts it in all colors, all attires,
To serve his ends and make his courses hold.
He sees, that let deceit work what it can,
Plot and contrive base ways to high desires,
That the all-guiding Providence doth yet 31
All disappoint, and mocks this smoke of
wit.

Nor is he moved with all the thunder cracks
Of tyrants' threats, or with the surly brow
Of Power, that proudly sits on others'
crimes, 35
Charged with more crying sins than those he
checks.

The storms of sad confusion, that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appal not him, that hath no side at all
But of himself, and knows the worst can
fall. 40

Although his heart (so near allied to earth)
Cannot but pity the perplexed state
Of troublous and distressed mortality,
That thus make way unto the ugly birth
Of their own sorrows, and do still beget 45
Affliction upon imbecility;
Yet seeing thus the course of things must
run

He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-
done.

And whilst distraught ambition compasses,
And is encompassed; whilst as craft de-
ceives, 50
And is deceived; whilst man doth ransack
man,
And builds on blood, and rises by distress;
And th' inheritance of desolation leaves
To great-expecting hopes: he looks thereon
As from the shore of peace, with unwet
eye, 55
And bears no venture in impiety.

SONNETS

(From *Delia*)

51

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
Relieve my languish, and restore the light;
With dark forgetting of my care, return,
And let the day be time enough to mourn 5
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth;
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars, 11
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain;
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

52

Let others sing of Knights and Paladins
In aged accents and untimely words;
Paint shadows in imaginary lines
Which well the reach of their high wits re-
cords:
But I must sing of thee, and those fair eyes 5
Authentic shall my verse in time to come;
When yet th' unborn shall say, "Lo where
she lies
Whose beauty made him speak that else was
dumb."
These are the arcs, the trophies I erect,
That fortify thy name against old age; 10
And these thy sacred virtues must protect
Against the dark, and Time's consuming
rage.
Though the error of my youth in them
appear,
Suffice they show I lived and loved thee dear.

MICHAEL DRAYTON

(1563-1631)

Although Drayton collaborated with some of the dramatists of his day, his fame rests upon the large body of poetry that he produced. Chief among his many works are *England's Heroical Epistles*, 1598; *Poems, Lyric and Heroic*, 1606, in which some of his best ballads appeared; *Nymphidia*; *Idea*, a sonnet-sequence; and his masterpiece, *Polyolbion*, 1612-1622, a vigorous description of the topography and history of England.

Drayton was fired with love for England, and at his best expresses this ardor in genuine poetry, even when keeping severely to facts, as was his custom.

SONNETS

(From *Idea*)

* TO THE READER OF THESE SONNETS

Into these loves, who but for passion looks,
At this first sight, here let him lay them
by,

And seek elsewhere in turning other books,
Which better may his labor satisfy.

No far-fetched sigh shall ever wound my
breast;

Love from mine eye a tear shall never
wring;

Nor in "Ah me's!" my whining sonnets
drest!

A libertine! fantastically I sing!

My verse is the true image of my mind,
Ever in motion, still desiring change;

And as thus, to variety inclined, 10
So in all humors sportively I range!

My Muse is rightly of the English strain,
That cannot long one fashion entertain.

24

I hear some say, "This man is not in love!"
"Who! can he love? a likely thing!" they
say.

"Read but his verse, and it will easily prove!"
O, judge not rashly, gentle Sir, I pray!

Because I loosely trifle in this sort, 5
As one that fain his sorrows would beguile,

You now suppose me, all this time, in sport,
And please yourself with this conceit the
while.

Ye shallow Censures! sometimes, see ye
not,

In greatest perils some men pleasant be? 10

Where Fame by death is only to be got,
They resolute! So stands the case with me.

Where other men in depth of passion cry,
I laugh at Fortune, as in jest to die!

44

Whilst thus my pen strives to eternize
thee,

Age rules my lines with wrinkles in my face,
Where, in the map of all my misery,

Is modeled out the world of my disgrace;
Whilst in despite of tyrannizing times, 5

Medea-like,¹ I make thee young again,
Proudly thou scorn'st my world-outwearing

rimes,

And murder'st Virtue with thy coy disdain!

And though in youth my youth untimely
perish

To keep thee from oblivion and the grave,

¹ Medea could restore a person's youth.

Ensuing ages yet my rimes shall cherish, 11
Where I entombed, my better part shall save;
And though this earthly body fade and die,
My name shall mount upon Eternity!

61

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and
part,—

Nay I have done, you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.

Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows, 5
And when we meet at any time again,

Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain!

Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When his pulse failing, Passion speechless

lies, 10

When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes,

— Now if thou would'st, when all have given
him over,

From death to life thou might'st him yet
recover!

ODE XI

This, and the succeeding ode, are from the
Ballad of Agincourt.

TO THE VIRGINIAN VOYAGE

You brave heroic minds,
Worthy your country's name,

That honor still pursue;

Go and subdue!

Whilst loitering hinds 5
Lurk here at home with shame.

Britons, you stay too long;
Quickly aboard bestow you!

And with a merry gale

Swell your stretched sail, 10

With vows as strong
As the winds that blow you!

Your course securely steer,
West-and-by-south forth keep!

Rocks, lee-shores, nor shoals, 15

When Eolus scowls,

You need not fear,
So absolute the deep.

And, cheerfully at sea,
Success you still entice, 20

To get the pearl and gold;

And ours to hold,

Virginia,
Earth's only Paradise.

Where Nature hath in store 25
 Fowl, venison, and fish;
 And the fruitful'st soil,
 Without your toil,
 Three harvests more,
 All greater than your wish. 30

And the ambitious vine
 Crowns with his purple mass
 The cedar reaching high
 To kiss the sky,
 The cypress pine, 35
 And useful sassafras.

To whom, the Golden Age
 Still Nature's laws doth give:
 Nor other cares attend,
 But them to defend 40
 From winter's rage,
 That long there doth not live.

When as the luscious smell
 Of that delicious land,
 Above the seas that flows, 45
 The clear wind throws,
 Your hearts to swell,
 Approaching the dear strand.

In kenning ¹ of the shore
 (Thanks to God first given!) 50
 O you, the happiest men,
 Be frolic then!
 Let cannons roar,
 Frightening the wide heaven!

And in regions far, 55
 Such heroes bring ye forth
 As those from whom we came!
 And plant our name
 Under that star
 Not known unto our North! 60

And as there plenty grows,
 The laurel everywhere,
 Apollo's sacred tree
 You may it see
 A poet's brows 65
 To crown, that may sing there.

Thy Voyages attend,
 Industrious Hakluyt! ²
 Whose reading shall inflame
 Men to seek fame; 70
 And much commend
 To after times thy wit.

ODE XII

TO THE CAMBRO-BRITONS ¹ AND THEIR HARP
 HIS BALLAD OF AGINCOURT

Fair stood the wind for France,
 When we our sails advance;
 Nor now to prove our chance
 Longer will tarry;
 But putting to the main, 5
 At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
 With all his martial train
 Landed King Harry.²

And taking many a fort,
 Furnished in warlike sort, 10
 Marcheth towards Agincourt
 In happy hour;
 Skirmishing, day by day,
 With those that stopped his way,
 Where the French general lay 15
 With all his power.

Which, in his height of pride,
 King Henry to deride,
 His ransom to provide,
 To the King sending; 20
 Which he neglects the while,
 As from a nation vile,
 Yet, with an angry smile,
 Their fall portending.

And turning to his men, 25
 Quoth our brave Henry then:
 "Though they to one be ten
 Be not amazed!
 Yet have we well begun;
 Battles so bravely won 30
 Have ever to the sun
 By Fame been raised!

"And for myself," quoth he,
 "This my full rest ³ shall be:
 England ne'er mourn for me, 35
 Nor more esteem me!
 Victor I will remain,
 Or on this earth lie slain;
 Never shall she sustain
 Loss to redeem me! 40

"Poitiers and Cressy tell,
 When most their pride did swell,
 Under our swords they fell.
 No less our skill is,
 Than when our grandsire great, 45
 Claiming the regal seat,
 By many a warlike feat
 Lopped the French lilies."

¹ recognition.

² Richard Hakluyt (1553?-1616), a clergyman, whose thrilling collection of voyages inspired English explorers and men of letters.

¹ The Welsh.

² Henry V.

³ decision.

The Duke of York so dread
 The eager vanward led;
 With the main, Henry sped
 Amongst his henchmen,
 Exeter had the rear,
 A braver man not there!
 O Lord, how hot they were
 On the false Frenchmen!

50

They now to fight are gone,
 Armor on armor shone,
 Drum now to drum did groan;
 To hear, was wonder;
 That, with the cries they make,
 The very earth did shake;
 Trumpet to trumpet spake;
 Thunder to thunder.

55

60

Well it thine age became,
 O noble Erpingham,
 Which didst the signal aim
 To our hid forces!
 When from a meadow by,
 Like a storm suddenly,
 The English archery
 Stuck the French horses.

65

70

With Spanish yew so strong,
 Arrows a cloth-yard long,
 That like to serpents stung,
 Piercing the weather.
 None from his fellow starts;
 But, playing manly parts,
 And like true English hearts,
 Stuck close together.

75

80

When down their bows they threw,
 And forth their bilboes¹ drew,
 And on the French they flew:
 Not one was tardy.
 Arms were from shoulders sent,
 Scalps to the teeth were rent,
 Down the French peasants went;
 Our men were hardly.

85

This while our noble King,
 His broad sword brandishing,
 Down the French host did ding,²
 As to o'erwhelm it;
 And many a deep wound lent,
 His arms with blood besprent,
 And many a cruel dent
 Bruised his helmet.

90

95

Gloucester, that duke so good,
 Next of the royal blood,
 For famous England stood,

With his brave brother.
 Clarence, in steel so bright,
 Though but a maiden knight,
 Yet in that furious fight
 Scarce such another!

100

Warwick in blood did wade,
 Oxford, the foe invade,
 And cruel slaughter made,
 Still as they ran up.
 Suffolk his axe did ply;
 Beaumont and Willoughby
 Bare them right doughtily,
 Ferrers, and Fanhope.

105

110

Upon Saint Crispin's Day
 Fought was this noble Fray;³
 Which Fame did not delay
 To England to carry.
 O when shall English men
 With such acts fill a pen?
 Or England breed again
 Such a King Harry?

115

120

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

(1564-1593)

Marlowe, the greatest dramatist of his time, was born in Canterbury in 1564, the son of a shoemaker. He was educated at the King's School, Canterbury, and at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he held a scholarship from 1581 to 1587, receiving both the bachelor's and the master's degrees. When he went to London is not known, but by 1587 he had produced the first part of Tamburlaine and made himself a powerful influence in English drama. Then followed in quick succession the second part of Tamburlaine, Faustus, The Jew of Malta, and Edward II, Marlowe's four great plays. The Massacre of Paris and The Tragedy of Dido, the latter written with Nash, are below his standard. It is possible likewise that he had a hand in the second and third parts of Shakespeare's Henry VI, and a smaller share in Titus Andronicus. His non-dramatic works include translations of Ovid and Lucan, splendid miscellaneous poems, and the well-known Hero and Leander, completed by Chapman after Marlowe's death.

Little is known of Marlowe's life aside from his writings, which are biography enough. That he was a dissolute, social outcast is not to be believed. His association with Sir Walter Raleigh, Kyd, and other liberal and speculative minds gave him the reputation of being an atheist. In 1593, because of his views, a warrant was issued for his arrest. Marlowe

1 swords.

2 strike.

3 October 25, 1415.

Beauty is but a flower,
Which wrinkles will devour;
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye;
I am sick, I must die —
Lord, have mercy on us!

15

Unless alarm came from the camp of love: 10
But fools do live, and waste their little
light,
And seek with pain their ever-during
night.

20

Strength stoops unto the grave,
Worms feed on Hector brave;
Swords may not fight with fate;
Earth still holds ope her gate;
"Come, come!" the bells do cry;
I am sick, I must die —
Lord, have mercy on us!

25

When timely death my life and fortune
ends,
Let not my hearse be vexed with mourning
friends;
But let all lovers, rich in triumph, come 15
And with sweet pastimes grace my happy
tomb:
And, Lesbia, close up thou my little light,
And crown with love my ever-during night.

Wit with his wantonness
Tasteth death's bitterness;
Hell's executioner
Hath no ears for her to hear
What vain art can reply;
I am sick, I must die —
Lord, have mercy on us!

30

WHEN TO HER LUTE CORINNA SINGS

Haste therefore each degree
To welcome destiny;
Heaven is our heritage,
Earth but a player's stage.
Mount we unto the sky;
I am sick, I must die —
Lord, have mercy on us!

35

When to her lute Corinna sings,
Her voice revives the leaden strings,
And doth in highest notes appear,
As any challenged echo clear;
But when she doth of mourning speak, 5
E'en with her sighs the strings do break.

40

And as her lute doth live or die,
Led by her passion, so must I!
For when of pleasure she doth sing,
My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring; 10
But if she doth of sorrow speak,
Ev'n from my heart the strings do break.

THOMAS CAMPION (d. 1619)

Campion, a graduate of Cambridge University, showed marked ability as a student of the law, as a doctor of medicine, and as a musician. As a poet he is second to few as a writer of exquisite verses after the manner of Horace and Catullus.

MY SWEETEST LESBIA

My sweetest Lesbia, let us live and love;
And though the sager sort our deeds re-
prove,
Let us not weigh them: heaven's great lamps
do dive
Into their west, and straight again revive:
But soon as once set is our little light, 5
Then must we sleep one ever-during night.

If all would lead their lives in love like me,
Then bloody swords and armor should not
be;
No drum nor trumpet peaceful sleeps should
move,

WHETHER MEN DO LAUGH OR WEEP

Whether men do laugh or weep,
Whether they do wake or sleep,
Whether they die young or old,
Whether they feel heat or cold;
There is, underneath the sun, 5
Nothing in true earnest done.

All our pride is but a jest;
None are worst, and none are best;
Grief and joy, and hope and fear,
Play their pageants everywhere: 10
Vain opinion all doth sway,
And the world is but a play.

Powers above in clouds do sit,
Mocking our poor apish wit;
That so lamely, with such state, 15
Their high glory imitate:
No ill can be felt but pain,
And that happy men disdain.

VAIN MEN, WHOSE FOLLIES MAKE A GOD OF LOVE

Vain men, whose follies make a god of Love,
Whose blindness beauty doth immortal deem;

Praise not what you desire but what you prove,

Count those things good that are, not those that seem:

I cannot call her true that's false to me, 5
Nor make of women more than women be.

How fair an entrance breaks the way to love!

How rich of golden hope and gay delight!
What heart cannot a modest beauty move?
Who, seeing clear day once, will dream of night? 10

She seemed a saint, that brake her faith with me,

But proved a woman as all other be.

So bitter is their sweet that true content

Unhappy men in them may never find:

Ah! but without them none. Both must content, 15

Else uncouth¹ are the joys of either kind.

Let us then praise their good, forget their ill!

Men must be men, and women women still.

NEVER LOVE UNLESS YOU CAN

Never love unless you can

Bear with all the faults of man:

Men sometimes will jealous be,

Though but little cause they see;

And hang the head, as discontent, 5

And speak what straight they will repent.

Men that but one saint adore,

Make a show of love to more:

Beauty must be scorned in none,

Though but truly served in one: 10

For what is courtship, but disguise?

True hearts may have dissembling eyes.

Men when their affairs require,

Must a while themselves retire:

Sometimes hunt, and sometimes hawk, 15

And not ever sit and talk.

If these, and such like you can bear,

Then like, and love, and never fear!

CHERRY RIPE

There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.
There cherries grow, which none may buy 5
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearl a double row;
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rosebuds filled with snow. 10
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threatening with piercing frowns to kill 15
All that attempt, with eye or hand,
Those sacred cherries to come nigh
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

CHANCE AND CHANGE

What if a day, or a month, or a year,
Crown thy delights, with a thousand sweet contentings?

Cannot a chance of a night, or an hour,
Cross thy desires, with as many sad tormentings?

Fortune, honor, beauty, youth, 5
Are but blossoms dying!

Wanton pleasure, doting love,

Are but shadows flying!

All our joys are but toys,

Idle thoughts deceiving; 10

None have power of an hour

In their life's bereaving.

Earth's but a point to the world; and a man

Is but a point to the world's compared center! 14

Shall, then, a point of a point be so vain

As to triumph in a silly point's adventure?

All is hazard that we have!

There is nothing biding!

Days of pleasure are like streams,

Through fair meadows gliding! 20

Weal and woe, Time doth go!

Time is never turning!

Secret fates guide our states;

Both in mirth and mourning!

JOHN FLETCHER

(1579-1625)

Fletcher, the son of a clergyman, was a graduate of Cambridge. In London he became associated with Beaumont, living with him, according to tradition, "on the Bankside, not far from the Play-house." Here they turned out a long series of popular and able plays. After Beaumont's retirement Fletcher collaborated with other dramatists, especially Shakespeare, Jonson, and Massinger. He died during the plague of 1625.

Fletcher's rank as a playwright is high, both in comedy and in tragedy, as a collaborator and alone. With Beaumont, he introduced a new era in English drama, during which they enjoyed a vogue greater than Shakespeare himself. He is, besides, an individual poet, with a genuine lyric note.

MELANCHOLY

(From *The Nice Valour*)

Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly!
There's nought in this life sweet,
If man were wise to see't, 5
But only melancholy;
O sweetest melancholy!

Welcome, folded arms and fixed eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that's fastened to the ground, 10
A tongue chained up without a sound!
Fountain heads and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves!
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly housed, save bats and owls!

A midnight bell, a parting groan, 16
These are the sounds we feed upon.
Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy
valley;
Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.

INVOCATION TO SLEEP

(From *Valentinian*)

Care-charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
Brother to Death, sweetly thyself dispose
On this afflicted prince; fall like a cloud,
In gentle showers; give nothing that is loud
Or painful to his slumbers; — easy, light, 5
And as a purling stream, thou son of Night,
Pass by his troubled senses; sing his pain

Like hollow murmuring wind or silver rain;
Into this prince gently, oh, gently slide,
And kiss him into slumbers like a bride! 10

ASPATIA'S SONG

(From *The Maid's Tragedy*)

Lay a garland on my hearse
Of the dismal yew;
Maidens, willow branches bear;
Say, I died true.

My love was false, but I was firm 5
From my hour of birth.
Upon my buried body lie
Lightly, gentle earth!

SONG TO BACCHUS

(From *Valentinian*)

God Lyæus¹ ever young,
Ever honored, ever sung;
Stained with blood of lusty grapes,
In a thousand lusty shapes,
Dance upon the mazer's² brim, 5
In the crimson liquor swim;
Upon thy plenteous hand divine
Let a river run with wine;
God of youth, let this day here
Enter neither care nor fear! 10

DRINK TO-DAY

(From *The Bloody Brother*)

Drink to-day, and drown all sorrow;
You shall perhaps not do it to-morrow:
Best, while you have it, use your breath;
There is no drinking after death.

Wine works the heart up, wakes the wit, 5
There is no cure 'gainst age but it:
It helps the headache, cough, and phthisic,
And is for all diseases physic.

Then let us swill, boys, for our health;
Who drinks well, loves the commonwealth. 10
And he that will to bed go sober
Falls with the leaf still in October.

AWAY, DELIGHTS!

(From *The Captain*)

Away, delights! go seek some other dwelling,
For I must die.
Farewell, false love! thy tongue is ever telling
Lie after lie.

¹ Bacchus.² cup's.

Forever let me rest now from thy smarts; 5
 Alas, for pity go
 And fire their hearts
 That have been hard to thee! Mine was not
 so.

Never again deluding love shall know me,
 For I will die; 10
 And all those griefs that think to overgrow
 me
 Shall be as I.
 Forever will I sleep, while poor maids cry:
 "Alas, for pity stay,
 And let us die 15
 With thee! Men cannot mock us in the
 clay."

WEEP NO MORE

(From *The Queen of Corinth*)

Weep no more, nor sigh, nor groan,
 Sorrow calls no time that's gone;
 Violets plucked the sweetest rain
 Makes not fresh nor grow again;
 Trim thy locks, look cheerfully; 5
 Fate's hid ends eyes cannot see;
 Joys as winged dreams fly fast,
 Why should sadness longer last?
 Grief is but a wound to woe;
 Gentlest fair, mourn, mourn no mo. 10

LOVE'S EMBLEMS

(From *Valentinian*)

Now the lusty spring is seen;
 Golden yellow, gaudy blue, !
 Daintily invite the view;
 Everywhere on every green,
 Roses blushing as they blow, 5
 And enticing men to pull
 Lilies whiter than the snow,
 Woodbines of sweet honey full:
 All love's emblems, and all cry,
 "Ladies, if not plucked, we die." 10

Yet the lusty spring hath stayed;
 Blushing red and purest white
 Daintily to love invite
 Every woman, every maid.
 Cherries kissing as they grow, 15
 And inviting men to taste,
 Apples even ripe below,
 Winding gently to the waist:
 All love's emblems, and all cry,
 "Ladies, if not plucked, we die." 20

i bloom.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT

(1584?-1616)

Beaumont, the son of a knight, was a student for a while at Oxford. He left the university upon his father's death and soon thereafter was admitted to the Inner Temple. After four or five years in London he entered upon the splendid collaboration with Fletcher, in which each seemed to supplement the other in fashioning effective poetic plays. This partnership lasted about eight years, when Beaumont retired from the theater, possibly because of his marriage. He died in 1616, at thirty-two, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

ON THE TOMBS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Mortality, behold and fear!
 What a change of flesh is here!
 Think how many royal bones
 Sleep within this heap of stones;
 Here they lie had realms and lands, 5
 Who now want strength to stir their hands;
 Where from their pulpits sealed with dust
 They preach, "In greatness is no trust."
 Here's an acre sown indeed
 With the richest royal'st seed 10
 That the earth did e'er suck in,
 Since the first man died for sin;
 Here the bones of birth have cried,
 "Though gods they were, as men they died." 15
 Here are sands, ignoble things,
 Dropt from the ruined sides of kings.
 Here's a world of pomp and state,
 Buried in dust, once dead by fate.

MASTER FRANCIS BEAUMONT'S LETTER TO BEN JONSON

The sun (which doth the greatest comfort
 bring
 To absent friends, because the selfsame
 thing
 They know they see, however absent) is
 Here our best haymaker! Forgive me this;
 It is our country's style! In this warm
 shine 5
 I lie and dream of your full Mermaid Wine!
 Oh, we have water mixed with claret lees,
 Drink apt to bring in drier heresies
 Than beer, good only for the sonnet's strain,
 With fustian metaphors to stuff the brain; 10
 So mixed, that, given to the thirstiest one,
 'Twill not prove alms, unless he have the
 stone.

I think that with one draught man's invention fades,
 Two cups had quite spoiled Homer's Ilades.
 'Tis liquor that will find out Sutcliff's wit, ¹⁵
 Lie where he will, and make him write worse yet.
 Filled with such moisture, in most grievous qualms,
 Did Robert Wisdom write his singing psalms;
 And so must I do this: And yet I think
 It is a potion sent us down to drink, ²⁰
 By special Providence, keeps us from fights,
 Makes us not laugh when we make legs ¹ to knights.
 'Tis this that keeps our minds fit for our states,
 A medicine to obey our magistrates:
 For we do live more free than you; no hate, ²⁵
 No envy at one another's happy state,
 Moves us; we are all equal; every whit
 Of land that God gives men here is their wit,
 If we consider fully; for our best
 And gravest man will with his main house-
 jest, ³⁰
 Scarce please you; we want subtlety to do
 The city-tricks, lie, hate, and flatter too.
 Here are none that can bear a painted show,
 Strike when you wink, and then lament the blow;
 Who, like mills set the right way for to grind, ³⁵
 Can make their gains alike with every wind:
 Only some fellows, with the subtlest pate
 Amongst us, may perchance equivocate
 At selling of a horse, and that's the most.
 Methinks the little wit I had is lost ⁴⁰
 Since I saw you! For wit is like a rest
 Held up at tennis, which men do the best
 With the best gamesters. What things have we seen
 Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
 So nimble and so full of subtle flame, ⁴⁵
 As if that every one from whence they came
 Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest
 And had resolved to live a fool the rest
 Of his dull life! Then, when there hath been thrown
 Wit able enough to justify the town ⁵⁰
 For three days past! Wit, that might war-
 rant be
 For the whole city to talk foolishly
 Till that were cancelled! And, when we were gone,
 We left an air behind us, which alone
 Was able to make the two next companies ⁵⁵

1 bow.

Right witty! though but downright fools,
 more wise!

When I remember this, and see that now
 The country gentlemen begin to allow
 My wit for dry bobs; ¹ then I needs must
 cry,

"I see my days of ballading grow nigh!" ⁶⁰

I can already riddle; and can sing
 Catches, sell bargains; and I fear shall bring
 Myself to speak the hardest words I find
 Over as oft as any, with one wind,
 That takes no medicines! But one thought
 of thee ⁶⁵

Makes me remember all these things to be
 The wit of our young men, fellows that show
 No part of good, yet utter all they know!
 Who, like trees of the guard, have growing
 souls.

Only strong Destiny, which all controls, ⁷⁰
 I hope hath left a better fate in store
 For me, thy friend, than to live ever poor,
 Banished unto this home! Fate, once again,
 Bring me to thee, who canst make smooth
 and plain

The way of knowledge for me; and then I, ⁷⁵
 Who have no good but in thy company,
 Protest it will my greatest comfort be
 To acknowledge all I have to flow from thee!

Ben, when these scenes are perfect, we'll
 taste wine!

I'll drink thy Muse's health! thou shalt quaff
 mine! ⁸⁰

JOHN WEBSTER

(1580?–1625?)

Scarcely anything is known with certainty of Webster's life. The few plays that are definitely his, and his collaboration with other playwrights, give him a well-merited place among the great Elizabethan dramatists. His famous play, *The Duchess of Malfi*, published in 1623, is considered by many the greatest tragedy since Shakespeare. Assuredly it is a worthy successor, among blood-and-thunder plays, to *The Spanish Tragedy* and to *Hamlet*. Webster had genuine dramatic insight. He was also endowed with a rare gift for lyrical expression, which he used in his tragedies as well as in his poems.

VANITAS VANITATUM

All the flowers of the spring
 Meet to perfume our burying;
 These have but their growing prime,
 And man does flourish but his time:

1 jests.

Survey our progress from our birth, — 5	And consequently this is done
We are set, we grow, we turn to earth.	As shadows wait upon the sun.
Courts adieu, and all delights,	Vain the ambition of kings
All bewitching appetites!	Who seek by trophies and dead things
Sweetest breath and clearest eye	To leave a living name behind, 15
Like perfumes go out and die; 10	And weave but nets to catch the wind.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

The known facts in Shakespeare's life may be briefly summarized. He was born in Stratford-on-Avon, and was baptized in the village church there, on April 26, 1564. The assumption is that he was born a few days before. It is assumed, too, that he attended the free grammar school in Stratford. The next fact is the record of the marriage license issued to the future dramatist and Anne Hathaway on November 28, 1582. Shakespeare was eighteen years old, Anne, twenty-six. Of the marriage there is no record. Their first child, Susanna, was baptized in May, 1583. In February, 1585, their only other children, Hamnet and Judith, twins, were baptized. During the next year, 1586, Shakespeare, it is assumed, went to London. What his first employment was is not known. From remarks by Greene in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, we know that by 1592 he had made a reputation as a dramatist. In 1593, *Venus and Adonis*, and in 1594, *Lucrece*, were entered at Stationers' Hall. By 1594, Shakespeare had won recognition as an actor. (Acting, it should be remembered, was more remunerative in Elizabethan times than playwriting.) In that year, as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company, he acted before the Queen. In 1596, his son Hamnet died. In 1597, he bought the largest place in Stratford. In 1598, he acted in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, along with Heminge, Condell, Kempe, and Burbage; and in the same year his first published plays, *Richard II* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, appeared in quarto editions. In 1599, he was granted a coat of arms by the College of Heralds. About this time he was made a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Company. From now on, Shakespeare's name appears in numerous business agreements, dealing mainly with the acquisition of real estate in London. In 1603, his *Sonnets* were published; and in the same year he evidently gave up acting. About 1611, it seems, he retired to Stratford, disposing of his shares in the theater. With the exception of his probable collaboration with Fletcher in *Henry VIII* and in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, he wrote no more. He died on April 23, 1616, and was buried in the church at Stratford.

Such are the main facts, few enough, that we have concerning Shakespeare's life. More important, however, is the legacy of plays he has left us: the richest single contribution to any drama. The plays are of unequal value, but the best have never been surpassed. They may be roughly divided into four groups, or periods: his apprenticeship (1590-93); the comedies (1594-1600); the great tragedies (1600-09), and the period of his "dramatic romances" (1610-12). A table, based on that in Neilson and Thorndike's *The Facts about Shakespeare*, with the dates which are commonly accepted, follows:

COMEDIES	HISTORIES	TRAGEDIES
I. <i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> (1591) <i>Comedy of Errors</i> (1591) <i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> (1591-92)	*1 <i>Henry VI</i> (1500-91) *2 <i>Henry VI</i> (1500-92) *3 <i>Henry VI</i> (1500-92) <i>Richard III</i> (1593) <i>John</i> (1593)	* <i>Titus Andronicus</i> (1593-94)
II. <i>Midsummer-Night's Dream</i> (1594-95) <i>Merchant of Venice</i> (1595-96) * <i>Taming of the Shrew</i> (1596-97) <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> (1598) <i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> (1599) <i>As You Like It</i> (1599-1600)	<i>Richard II</i> (1595) 1 <i>Henry IV</i> (1597) 2 <i>Henry IV</i> (1598) <i>Henry V</i> (1599)	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1594-95)
III. <i>Twelfth Night</i> (1601) <i>Troilus and Cressida</i> (1601-02) <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> (1602) <i>Measure for Measure</i> (1603)		<i>Julius Caesar</i> (1599-1601) <i>Hamlet</i> (1602-03) <i>Othello</i> (1604) <i>King Lear</i> (1605-06) <i>Macbeth</i> (1606) * <i>Timon of Athens</i> (1607) <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> (1607-08) <i>Coriolanus</i> (1609)
* <i>Pericles</i> (1607-08)		
IV. <i>Cymbeline</i> (1610) <i>The Winter's Tale</i> (1611) <i>The Tempest</i> (1611) * <i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i> (1613)	* <i>Henry VIII</i> (1613)	

*Written (it is supposed) in collaboration with others.

The selections given below illustrate only Shakespeare the poet, the greatest lyric poet of his day.

The most convenient and trustworthy handbook about Shakespeare is Neilson and Thorndike's *The Facts about Shakespeare* (Macmillan). Among the many books about Shakespeare's life and art, the reader should consult those by G. P. Baker, A. C. Bradley, G. Brandes, E. Dowden, S. Lee, B. Matthews, and B. Wendell. Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Lamb wrote stimulating and appreciative essays on various phases of Shakespeare's plays. The most recent biography is by J. Quincy Adams (Houghton Mifflin Company).

SONNETS

Shakespeare's sonnets circulated in manuscript at least ten years before they were brought together for publication, probably without Shakespeare's consent, in 1609. To whom they were written has never been ascertained. They may have been addressed to no real person—a convention in sonnet-writing which was common in Elizabethan times. Some of them may have been written to a young man, some to a certain dark lady. How far the material in the sonnets is autobiographical or based on personal experience is also debatable. Note, in this connection, the obvious similarity between Sonnet 66 and Hamlet's well-known soliloquy. One thing is sure: they are worthy products of Shakespeare's genius, beautiful expressions of thought and feeling, whatever their source may be.

15

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth naught but
shows

Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;

When I perceive that men as plants increase,⁵

Cheered and checked even by the self-same sky,

Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,

And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay

Sets you most rich in youth, before my sight,¹⁰

Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
To change your day of youth to sullied night;

And, all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft¹ you new.

18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

1 inoculate.

And often is his gold complexion dimmed; 6
And every fair¹ from fair sometime declines,

By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest; 10
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

23

As an imperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his fear is put besides his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much
rage,

Whose strength's abundance weakens his
own heart,

So I, for fear of trust, forget to say 5
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,

And in mine own love's strength seem to
decay,

O'ercharged with burden of mine own love's
might.

O, let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking
breast, 10

Who plead for love and look for recompense,
More than that tongue that more hath more
expressed.

O, learn to read what silent love hath writ:
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine
wit.

25

Let those who are in favor with their stars
Of public honor and proud titles boast,

Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlooked for joy in that I honor most.

Great princes' favorites their fair leaves
spread 5

But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
And in themselves their pride lies buried,

For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famed for fight,

After a thousand victories once foiled, 10
Is from the book of honor razed quite,

1 beauty.

And all the rest forgot for which he toiled:
 Then happy I, that love and am beloved,
 Where I may not remove nor be removed.

29

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's
 eyes,
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless
 cries

And look upon myself and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, 5
 Featured like him, like him with friends
 possessed,

Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,

Haply I think on thee, — and then my state,
 Like to the lark at break of day arising 11
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's
 gate;

For thy sweet love remembered such wealth
 brings

That then I scorn to change my state with
 kings.

30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
 I summon up remembrance of things past,
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's
 waste:

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow, 5
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless 1
 night,

And weep afresh love's long since cancelled
 woe,

And moan the expense 2 of many a vanished
 sight:

Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er 10
 The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
 All losses are restored and sorrows end.

32

If thou survive my well-contented day,
 When that churl Death my bones with dust
 shall cover,

And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
 These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,
 Compare them with the bettering of the
 time, 5

And though they be outstripped by every
 pen,

1 endless.

2 loss.

Reserve them for my love, not for their
 rime,

Exceeded by the height of happier men.
 O, then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:
 "Had my friend's Muse grown with this
 growing age, 10

A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
 To march in ranks of better equipage:

But since he died and poets better prove,
 Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his
 love."

33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
 Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
 Kissing with golden face the meadows green;
 Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
 Anon permit the basest clouds to ride 5
 With ugly rack 1 on his celestial face,

And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
 Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
 Even so my sun one early morn did shine
 With all-triumphant splendor on my brow; 10
 But out! alack! he was but one hour mine;
 The region cloud hath masked him from me
 now.

Yet him for this my love no whit dis-
 daineth;

Suns of the world may stain when heaven's
 sun staineth.

54

O, how much more doth beauty beauteous
 seem

By that sweet ornament which truth doth
 give!

The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
 For that sweet odor which doth in it live.

The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye 5
 As the perfumed tincture of the roses,

Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
 When summer's breath their masked buds
 discloses;

But, for 2 their virtue only is their show,
 They live unwooded and unprotected fade, 10

Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
 Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odors
 made:

And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
 When that shall fade, my verse distills your
 truth.

55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
 Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;
 But you shall shine more bright in these
 contents

1 framework.

2 since.

Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish
time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn, 5
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall
burn

The living record of your memory.

'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity

Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still
find room 10

Even in the eyes of all posterity

That wear this world out to the ending doom.

So, till the judgment that yourself arise,

You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

60

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled
shore,

So do our minutes hasten to their end;

Each changing place with that which goes
before,

In sequent toil all forwards do contend.

Nativity, once in the main of light, 5

Crawls to maturity, wherewith being
crowned,

Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,

And Time that gave doth now his gift con-
found.

Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth

And delves the parallels in beauty's brow, 10

Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,

And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow;

And yet to times in hope my verse shall
stand,

Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

64

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced

The rich-proud cost of outworn buried age;

When sometime lofty towers I see down-
razed,

And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;

When I have seen the hungry ocean gain 5

Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,

And the firm soil win of the watery main,

Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;

When I have seen such interchange of state,

Or state itself confounded to decay; 10

Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate, —

That Time will come and take my love away.

This thought is as a death, which cannot
choose

But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

65

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor bound-
less sea,

But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,

How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

O, how shall summer's honey breath hold
out 5

Against the wrackful siege of battering days,

When rocks impregnable are not so stout,

Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?

O fearful meditation! where, alack,

Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie
hid? 10

Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot
back?

Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?

O, none, unless this miracle have might,

That in black ink my love may still shine
bright.

66

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,

As, to behold desert a beggar born,

And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,

And purest faith unhappily forsworn,

And gilded honor shamefully misplaced, 5

And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,

And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,

And strength by limping sway disabled,

And art made tongue-tied by authority,

And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill, 10

And simple truth miscalled simplicity,

And captive good attending captain ill:

Tired with all these, from these would I
be gone,

Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

70

That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect,

For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;

The ornament of beauty is suspect,

A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.

So thou be good, slander doth but approve 5

Thy worth the greater, being wooed of time;

For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,

And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.

Thou hast passed by the ambush of young
days,

Either not assailed, or victor being charged; 10

Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,

To tie up envy evermore enlarged:

If some suspect of ill masked not thy show,

Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts
shouldst owe.

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead

Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell

Give warning to the world that I am fled

1 "Such things as the following: to see merit treated as
a beggar," etc.

From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:

Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse,
When I perhaps compounded am with clay, 10
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay;

Lest the wise world should look into your
moan

And mock you with me after I am gone.

73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the
cold,

Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet
birds sang.

In me thou see'st the twilight of such day 5
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, 10
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished
by.

This thou perceivest, which makes thy love
more strong,

To love that well which thou must leave
ere long.

90

Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now;
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to
cross,

Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss:

Ah, do not, when my heart hath scaped this
sorrow, 5

Come in the rearward of a conquered woe,
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purposed overthrow.

If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their
spite, 10

But in the onset come; so shall I taste

At first the very worst of fortune's might;

And other strains of woe, which now seem
woe,

Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.

97

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!

What freezings have I felt, what dark days
seen!

What old December's bareness every where!
And yet this time removed was summer's
time, 5

The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
Like widowed wombs after their lords'
decease:

Yet this abundant issue seemed to me
But hope of orphans and unfathered fruit; 10
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute;

Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer,
That leaves look pale, dreading the win-
ter's near.

98

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April dressed in all his trim
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with
him.

Yet nor the lays of birds nor the sweet smell 5
Of different flowers in odor and in hue
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where
they grew;

Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose; 10
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.

Yet seemed it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

104

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters
cold

Have from the forests shook three summers'
pride,

Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn
turned 5

In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes
burned

Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are
green.

Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure and no pace perceived; 10
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth
stand,

Hath motion and mine eye may be deceived:
For fear of which, hear this, thou age un-
bred:

Ere you were born was beauty's summer
dead.

106

When in the chronicle of wasted time
 I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
 And beauty making beautiful old rime
 In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
 Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best, 5
 Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
 I see their antique pen would have expressed
 Even such a beauty as you master now.
 So all their praises are but prophecies
 Of this our time, all you prefiguring; 10
 And, for they looked but with divining
 eyes,
 They had not skill enough your worth to
 sing:
 For we, which now behold these present
 days,
 Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to
 praise.

107

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
 Of the wide world dreaming on things to
 come,
 Can yet the lease of my true love control,
 Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.
 The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured, 5
 And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
 Incertainties now crown themselves assured,
 And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
 Now with the drops of this most balmy
 time
 My love looks fresh, and Death to me sub-
 scribes, 10
 Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor
 rime,
 While he insults o'er dull and speechless
 tribes:
 And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
 When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass
 are spent.

109

O, never say that I was false of heart,
 Though absence seemed my flame to qualify.
 As easy might I from myself depart
 As from my soul, which in thy breast doth
 lie:
 That is my home of love: if I have ranged, 5
 Like him that travels I return again,
 Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
 So that myself bring water for my stain.
 Never believe, though in my nature reigned
 All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood, 10
 That it could so preposterously be stained,
 To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
 For nothing this wide universe I call,
 Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

110

Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there
 And made myself a motley to the view,
 Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what
 is most dear,
 Made old offences of affections new;
 Most true it is that I have looked on truth 5
 Askance and strangely; but, by all above,
 These blenches¹ gave my heart another
 youth,
 And worse essays proved thee my best of love.
 Now all is done, have what shall have no end:
 Mine appetite I never more will grind 10
 On newer proof, to try an older friend,
 A god in love, to whom I am confined.
 Then give me welcome, next my heaven
 the best,
 Even to thy pure and most most loving
 breast.

111

O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
 The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
 That did not better for my life provide
 Than public means which public manners
 breeds.
 Thence comes it that my name receives a 5
 brand,
 And almost thence my nature is subdued
 To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
 Pity me then and wish I were renewed;
 Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
 Potions of eisel² 'gainst my strong infec- 10
 tion;
 No bitterness that I will bitter think,
 Nor double penance, to correct correction.
 Pity me then, dear friend, and I assure ye
 Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove:
 O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark 5
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height
 be taken.
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and 10
 cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come; 10
 Love alters not with his brief hours and
 weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

¹ side-looks.² vinegar.

119

What potions have I drunk of Siren tears,
Distilled from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win!

What wretched errors hath my heart committed, ⁵

Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never!

How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,

In the distraction of this madding fever!

O benefit of ill! now I find true

That better is by evil still made better; ¹⁰

And ruined love, when it is built anew,

Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.

So I return rebuked to my content,

And gain by ill thrice more than I have spent.

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;

Coral is far more red than her lips' red;

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

I have seen roses damasked, ¹ red and white, ⁵

But no such roses see I in her cheeks;

And in some perfumes is there more delight

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know

That music hath a far more pleasing sound; ¹⁰

I grant I never saw a goddess go;

My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare

As any she belied with false compare.

146

Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth,

Thrall to these rebel powers that thee array,

Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,

Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?

Why so large cost, having so short a lease, ⁵

Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?

Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,

Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?

Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,

And let that pine to aggravate thy store; ¹⁰

Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;

¹ with mingled colors.

Within be fed, without be rich no more:

So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,

And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

SONGS FROM THE PLAYS

(From *Love's Labour's Lost*)

When icicles hang by the wall,

And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,

And Tom bears logs into the hall,

And milk comes frozen home in pail, ⁵

When blood is nipped and ways be foul,

Then nightly sings the staring owl,

Tu-who;

Tu-whit, tu-who! — a merry note,

While greasy Joan doth keel ¹ the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow, ¹⁰

And coughing drowns the parson's saw,

And birds sit brooding in the snow,

And Marian's nose looks red and raw,

When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,

Then nightly sings the staring owl, ¹⁵

Tu-who;

Tu-whit, tu-who! — a merry note,

While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

Wherefore
(From *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*)

Who is Silvia? what is she,

That all our swains commend her?

Holy, fair, and wise is she;

The heaven such grace did lend her,

That she might admired be. ⁵

Is she kind as she is fair?

For beauty lives with kindness:

Love doth to her eyes repair

To help him of his blindness,

And, being helped, inhabits there. ¹⁰

Then to Silvia let us sing,

That Silvia is excelling;

She excels each mortal thing

Upon the dull earth dwelling:

To her let us garlands bring. ¹⁵

(From *The Merchant of Venice*)

Tell me, where is fancy ² bred,

Or in the heart, or in the head?

How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply.

It is engendered in the eyes, ⁵

With gazing fed; and fancy dies

In the cradle where it lies.

¹ cool by skimming or stirring.

² love.

Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell.
Ding, dong, bell.

(From *As You Like It*)

Under the greenwood tree *he merrily*
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither! 5
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

(From *As You Like It*)

Blow, blow, thou winter wind!
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude. 5

Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere
folly.

Then, heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly. 10

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky!
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp 15
As friend remembered not.

Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! etc.

(From *As You Like It*)

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green corn-field did pass,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding; 5
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
These pretty country folks would lie,
In the spring time, etc. 10

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that a life was but a flower
In the spring time, etc.

And therefore take the present time, 15
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crowned with the prime
In the spring time, etc.

(From *Much Ado about Nothing*)

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more!
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never: 5
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny!

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe
Of dumps so dull and heavy! 10
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy:
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe 15
Into Hey nonny, nonny!

(From *Twelfth Night*)

O, mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers meeting, 5
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure.
In delay there lies no plenty; 10
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

(From *Twelfth Night*)

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew, 5
O, prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown; 10
Not a friend, not a friend greet

- My poor corpse, where my bones shall be
thrown.
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O, where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there! 15
- (From *Measure for Measure*)
- Take, O, take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn:
But my kisses bring again,
Bring again;
Seals of love, but sealed in vain,
Sealed in vain!
- (From *Cymbeline*)
- Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;¹
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With every thing that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise:
Arise, arise!
- (From *Cymbeline*)
- Fear no more the heat o' th' sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust. 5
- Fear no more the frown o' th' great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
- Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak: 10
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.
- Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor th' all-dreaded thunder-stone;¹
Fear not slander, censure rash; 15
Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.
- No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee! 20
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!
- (From *The Tempest*)
- Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes; 5
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change 5
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong!
Hark! now I hear them, — Ding-dong, bell!
- (From *The Tempest*)
- Where the bee sucks, there suck I.
In a cowslip's bell I lie:
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily. 5
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

¹ A singular verb with a plural subject is not uncommon in Elizabethan poetry.

¹ bolt.

BEN JONSON (1573-1637)

Jonson was born in poverty at Westminster in 1573. He was admitted to Westminster School through the liberality of its master, William Camden, the antiquary. He may have attended St. John's College, Cambridge. After an unhappy marriage, he served with the army in Flanders. Then he became an actor and playwright in London. In 1598 he was imprisoned for killing another actor in a duel, and during the same year he won instantaneous success with his *Every Man in his Humour*. He followed this with *Sejanus*, *Eastward Hol*, *Volpone*, *Epicæne*, *The Alchemist*, *Catiline*, *Bartholomew Fair*, among other plays; and in 1616 he published a collected edition of his works in folio.

In his plays, Jonson followed classical rules. In his poems, collected under the titles *Underwoods* and *The Forest*, he is graceful and delicate, the idol of younger poets who rejoiced in the name of "the sons of Ben." In his critical writings, *Timber*, or *Discoveries*, he shows himself a critic who, with all his rigid classicism, was liberal in his literary views.

The last few years of Jonson's life were unsuccessful. He died in 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey — in a vertical position, to save precious space.

Jonson's best plays may be found in the Mermaid Series. The completest and most recent study of Jonson is by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, 2 volumes (Oxford Press).

SONG TO CELIA

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
 And I will pledge with mine;
 Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
 And I'll not look for wine.
 The thirst that from the soul doth rise 5
 Doth ask a drink divine;
 But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
 I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
 Not so much honoring thee,
 As giving it a hope that there 10
 It could not withered be.
 But thou thereon didst only breathe,
 And sent'st it back to me;
 Since when it grows, and smells, I swear, 15
 Not of itself, but thee.

HYMN TO DIANA¹

(From *Cynthia's Revels*)

Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair,
 Now the sun is laid to sleep,
 Seated in thy silver chair,
 State in wonted manner keep:
 Hesperus² entreats thy light, 5
 Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
 Dare itself to interpose;
 Cynthia's shining orb was made
 Heaven to clear when day did close: 10
 Bless us then with wished sight,
 Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
 And thy crystal-shining quiver;
 Give unto the flying hart 15
 Space to breathe, how short soever:
 Thou that mak'st a day of night,
 Goddess excellently bright.

SIMPLEX MUNDITIIS

(From *Epicæne*)

The title, added later, is from Horace, Book I, Ode 5. It means "in simple elegance."

Still¹ to be neat, still to be drest,
 As you were going to a feast;
 Still to be powdered, still perfumed:
 Lady, it is to be presumed,
 Though art's hid causes are not found, 5
 All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face
 That makes simplicity a grace;
 Robes loosely flowing, hair as free;
 Such sweet neglect more taketh me 10
 Than all th' adulteries of art;
 They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

TO THE MEMORY OF MY
BELOVED MASTER, WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE

To draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,
 Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
 While I confess thy writings to be such
 As neither man, nor muse, can praise too 10
 much.

'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these
 ways 5
 Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise;
 For silliest ignorance on these may light,
 Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes
 right;

Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance
 The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by
 chance; 10

Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
 And think to ruin, where it seemed to raise.
 These are, as¹ some infamous bawd or whore
 Should praise a matron. What could hurt
 her more?

But thou art proof against them, and, in-
 deed, 15

Above the ill fortune of them, or the need.
 I therefore will begin. Soul of the age!
 The applause, delight, the wonder of our
 stage!

My Shakespeare, rise! I will not lodge thee
 by

Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie 20
 A little farther off, to make thee a room:
 Thou art a monument without a tomb,
 And art alive still while thy book doth live
 And we have wits to read and praise to
 give.

That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses, 25
 I mean with great, but disproportioned
 Muses;

For if I thought my judgment were of years,
 I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
 And tell how far thou didst our Lyly out-
 shine,

Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty
 line. 30

And though thou hadst small Latin and less
 Greek,

From thence to honor thee, I would not seek

¹ Here, the moon-goddess.

² The character in *Cynthia's Revels* who sings this song.

³ always.

¹ as if.

For names; but call forth thundering
Æschylus,¹

Euripides, and Sophocles to us;
Pacuvius,² Accius,² him of Cordova³ dead, 35
To life again, to hear thy buskin tread,
And shake a stage; or, when thy socks were
on,

Leave thee alone for the comparison
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes
come. 40

Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm 45
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!

Nature herself was proud of his designs,
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit. 50
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,⁴
Neat Terence,⁵ witty Plautus, now not
please;

But antiquated and deserted lie,
As they were not of Nature's family.
Yet must I not give Nature all; thy art, 55
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
For though the poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the fashion; and, that he
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
(Such as thine are) and strike the second
heat 60

Upon the Muses' anvil; turn the same
(And himself with it) that he thinks to frame,
Or, for the laurel, he may gain a scorn;
For a good poet's made, as well as born.
And such wert thou! Look how the father's
face 65

Lives in his issue, even so the race
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly
shines

In his well turned, and true filed lines;
In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
As brandished at the eyes of ignorance. 70
Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our water yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of
Thames,

That so did take Eliza,⁶ and our James!
But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere 75

¹ Eldest of the three great Greek dramatists: Æschylus, 525-456 B.C., Sophocles, 496-406 B.C., Euripides, 480-406 B.C.

² Minor Roman tragic poets of the second century, B.C. ³ Seneca, the famous Roman philosopher and writer of tragedies, 4 B.C.-65 A.D., was born in Spain.

⁴ The greatest Greek comic dramatist, 448?-380? B.C. ⁵ Terence, 190?-150? B.C., and Plautus, 254?-184 B.C., the two foremost writers of Roman comedy.

⁶ Queen Elizabeth.

Advanced, and made a constellation there!
Shine forth, thou star of poets, and with rage
Or influence, chide or cheer the drooping
stage,

Which, since thy flight from hence, hath
mourned like night.

And despairs day, but for thy volume's
light. 80

A PINDARIC ODE¹

ON THE DEATH OF SIR H. MORISON
TO THE IMMORTAL MEMORY AND FRIENDSHIP
OF THAT NOBLE PAIR, SIR LUCIUS CARY
AND SIR H. MORISON.

I

The Strophe, or Turn

Brave infant of Saguntum,² clear
Thy coming forth in that great year,
When the prodigious Hannibal did crown
His rage with razing your immortal town.

Thou looking then about, 5
Ere thou wert half got out,
Wise child, didst hastily return,
And mad'st thy mother's womb thine urn.
How summed³ a circle didst thou leave man-
kind
Of deepest lore, could we the center find! 10

The Antistrophe, or Counter-Turn

Did wiser nature draw thee back,
From out the horror of that sack;
Where shame, faith, honor, and regard of
right,
Lay trampled on? the deeds of death and night
Urged, hurried forth, and hurled 15
Upon the affrighted world;
Fire and famine with fell fury met,
And all on utmost ruin set:
As, could they but life's miseries foresee,
No doubt all infants would return like thee.

The Epode, or Stand

For what is life, if measured by the space, 21
Not by the act?
Or masked man, if valued by his face,
Above his fact?
Here's one outlived his peers 25

¹ The Greek ode, perfected by Pindar, 522-448? B.C., was written to be chanted by a chorus. It consisted of one or more sections, each composed of a strophe, an antistrophe, and an epode or after-song. The antistrophe had to be the exact counterpart of the strophe, in order to bring the chorus, which moved across the stage in rhythm with the music, back to its starting place.

² The incident mentioned here was supposed to have happened during the capture of Saguntum in Spain by Hannibal.

³ complete.

And told forth fourscore years:
 He vexed time, and busied the whole state;
 Troubled both foes and friends;
 But ever to no ends:
 What did this stirrer but die late? 30
 How well at twenty had he fallen or stood!
 For three of his four score he did no good.

2

The Strophe, or Turn

He entered well by virtuous parts,
 Got up, and thrived with honest arts,
 He purchased friends, and fame, and honors
 then, 35
 And had his noble name advanced with men;
 But weary of that flight,
 He stooped in all men's sight
 To sordid flatteries, acts of strife,
 And sunk in that dead sea of life, 40
 So deep, as he did then death's waters sup,
 But that the cork of title buoyed him up.

The Antistrophe, or Counter-Turn

Alas! but Morison fell young!
 He never fell, — thou fall'st, my tongue.
 He stood a soldier to the last right end, 45
 A perfect patriot and a noble friend;
 But most, a virtuous son.
 All offices were done
 By him, so ample, full, and round,
 In weight, in measure, number, sound, 50
 As, though his age imperfect might appear,
 His life was of humanity the sphere.

The Epode, or Stand

Go now, and tell our days summed up with
 fears,
 And make them years;
 Produce thy mass of miseries on the stage, 55
 To swell thine age;
 Repeat of things a throng,
 To show thou hast been long,
 Not lived; for life doth her great actions
 spell,
 By what was done and wrought 60
 In season, and so brought
 To light: her measures are, how well
 Each syllabe answered, and was formed, how
 fair;
 These make the lines of life, and that's her
 air!

3

The Strophe, or Turn

It is not growing like a tree 65
 In bulk, doth make men better be;

Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
 To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear:
 A lily of a day,
 Is fairer far, in May, 70
 Although it fall and die that night;
 It was the plant and flower of light.
 In small proportions we just beauties see;
 And in short measures life may perfect be.

The Antistrophe, or Counter-Turn

Call, noble Lucius, then, for wine, 75
 And let thy looks with gladness shine;
 Accept this garland, plant it on thy head,
 And think, nay know, thy Morison's not dead.
 He leaped the present age,
 Possessed with holy rage, 80
 To see that bright eternal day;
 Of which we priests and poets say
 Such truths as we expect for happy men;
 And there he lives with memory, and Ben —

The Epode, or Stand

Jonson, who sung this of him, ere he went, 85
 Himself, to rest,
 Or taste a part of that full joy he meant
 To have expressed,
 In this bright asterism; ¹ —
 Where it were friendship's schism, 90
 Were not his Lucius long with us to tarry,
 To separate these two-
 Lights, the Dioscuri; ²
 And keep the one half from his Harry.
 But fate doth so alternate the design, 95
 Whilst that in heaven, this light on earth
 must shine, —

4

The Strophe, or Turn

And shine as you exalted are;
 Two names of friendship, but one star:
 Of hearts the union, and those not by chance
 Made, or indenture, or leased out t' ad-
 vance 100
 The profits for a time.
 No pleasures vain did chime,
 Of rhymes, or riots, at your feasts,
 Orgies of drink, or feigned protests;
 But simple love of greatness and of good, 105
 That knits brave minds and manners more
 than blood.

The Antistrophe, or Counter-Turn

This made you first to know the why
 You liked, then after, to apply

¹ constellation.

² The twins, Castor and Pollux, whom Zeus allowed to live on alternate days after their death.

That liking; and approach so one the t' other,
 Till either grew a portion of the other; 110
 Each styled by his end,
 The copy of his friend.
 You lived to be the great sir-names
 And titles by which all made claims
 Unto the Virtue: nothing perfect done, 115
 But as a Cary or a Morison.

The Epode, or Stand

And such a force the fair example had,
 As they that saw
 The good and durst not practise it, were glad
 That such a law 120
 Was left yet to mankind;
 Where they might read and find
 Friendship, indeed, was written not in
 words;
 And with the heart, not pen,
 Of two so early men, 125
 Whose lines her rolls were, and records;
 Who, ere the first down bloomed on the chin,
 Had sowed these fruits, and got the harvest in.

EPITAPH ON ELIZABETH L. H.

Would'st thou hear what man can say
 In a little? Reader, stay.

Underneath this stone doth lie
 As much beauty as could die:
 Which in life did harbor give 5
 To more virtue than doth live.

If at all she had a fault,
 Leave it buried in this vault.
 One name was Elizabeth,
 The other, let it sleep with death! 10
 Fitter, where it died, to tell,
 Than that it lived at all. Farewell!

A FAREWELL TO THE WORLD

False world, good night! since thou hast
 brought
 That hour upon my morn of age;

Henceforth I quit thee for my thought,
 My part is ended on thy stage.

Yes, threaten, do. Alas! I fear 5
 As little as I hope from thee:
 I know thou canst not show nor bear
 More hatred than thou hast to me.

My tender, first, and simple years
 Thou didst abuse and then betray; 10
 Since stirred'st up jealousies and fears,
 When all the causes were away.

Then in a soil hast planted me
 Where breathe the basest of thy fools;
 Where envious arts professed be, 15
 And pride and ignorance the schools;

Where nothing is examined, weighed,
 But as 'tis rumored, so believed;
 Where every freedom is betrayed,
 And every goodness taxed or grieved. 20

But what we're born for, we must
 bear:
 Our frail condition it is such
 That what to all may happen here,
 If 't chance to me, I must not grutch.¹

Else I my state should much mistake 25
 To harbor a divided thought
 From all my kind — that, for my sake,
 There should a miracle be wrought.

No, I do know that I was born
 To age, misfortune, sickness, grief: 30
 But I will bear these with that scorn
 As shall not need thy false relief.

Nor for my peace will I go far,
 As wanderers do, that still do roam; 34
 But make my strengths, such as they
 are,
 Here in my bosom, and at home.

¹ murmur, complain.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The seventeenth century is a many-sided period in the history of English literature. It is the century of Shakespeare's greatest plays, of the King James version of the Bible, of Bacon, Milton, and Dryden. It saw the colonization of America, the Civil War and the execution of Charles I, the Restoration of the Stuarts, and, toward its close, the introduction of genuine parliamentary government through the Declaration of Rights, with William of Orange as king. Ushered in when the imagination of the glorious Elizabethan age was at its height, it closed with reason and rules dominating literature.

The political life of the century may be briefly summarized. In 1603 Queen Elizabeth died. She was succeeded by the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, James VI of Scotland, who as James I of England began the line of English Stuarts. His reign was marked by the rise of the Puritans. In 1625 he was succeeded by his son Charles, who followed his father's belief in the divine right of kings. In 1628 Charles I was forced, as a result of his independent acts, to agree to the Petition of Right, which strengthened the power of Parliament and asserted the rights of the people. In spite of this, he continued to rule as he pleased and antagonized the Puritans to such a degree that many of them emigrated to America. In 1642 he refused to obey Parliament, and Civil War broke out. Under Cromwell Parliament was victorious in battle, and in 1649 King Charles I, declared guilty of treason, was beheaded. From 1649 to 1653 Parliament governed the country. This government was called the Commonwealth. In 1653 Parliament relinquished its power to Cromwell, who was made Lord Protector under the Protectorate. Upon his death in 1658, the power of the Puritans broke up, and in 1660 King Charles II was invited to return to his father's throne. During these years the Puritans were severe in banishing simple pleasures and making life less colorful, but it must not be forgotten that they were idealists who deserve endless credit for furthering the cause of religious toleration, freedom of speech and of the press, and justice in open court.

After 1660 English life and society changed with the return of the Royalists from exile. The sway of the Puritan yielded to that of the Cavalier. Somber London of the previous generation gave way to the "gala day of wit and pleasure, of gallantry and Charles II." Refinement, elegance, and wit became gods of the courtiers. Hazlitt's brilliant picture is probably not too far from the truth. "Happy, thoughtless age, when kings and nobles led purely ornamental lives; when the utmost stretch of a morning's study went no farther than the choice of a sword-knot, or the adjustment of a side-curl; when the soul spoke out in all the pleasing eloquence of dress; and beaux and belles, enamored of themselves in one another's follies, fluttered like gilded butterflies, in giddy mazes, through the walks of St. James's Park!"

In the drama, the century saw a rise and fall. At the beginning, Shakespeare was at his best. After 1611 he apparently retired from the stage, probably in favor of the great collaborators, Beaumont and Fletcher, who throughout the century were by far the most popular dramatists in England. Their plays were acted during the Restoration, says Dryden, twice as often as Shakespeare's. Among other playwrights up to 1642, Jonson, Chapman, Heywood, Middleton, Webster, Ford, Shirley, and Massinger are the best. Among their many plays stand several undoubted masterpieces, most prominent, Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, and Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. In general, the theater was passing from the patronage of the common people to a more sophisticated audience composed largely of the court. Plots became more licentious, the desire to shock and to be shocked increased, with the result that Puritan antagonism grew rapidly. With the outbreak of the Civil War the theaters were officially closed by Parliament, and remained so until 1660. Theatrical performances, however, were given surreptitiously during this period. The old tradition carried on; but, when the theaters were reopened in 1660, a new type of play quickly developed, largely under the influence of the French stage with which the Royalists had become acquainted during their exile in France. This was the so-called "heroic drama." Its characteristics were the use of the heroic couplet instead of blank verse; the strict or partial observance of the three unities of time, place, and action; the employment (for the first time on the English stage) of women actors; the preference for gigantic themes involving love and honor, particularly in an Eastern setting; the elaborate use of scenery, music, and whatever else would heighten the spectacle — all in a large rectangular auditorium, which supplanted the much smaller, almost circular theater of Elizabethan days. In heroic tragedy Dryden was the prominent figure. A "minor" writer, Otway, however, produced the ablest tragedy, *Venice Preserved*, 1682, the best tragedy in verse since Webster, or possibly since Shakespeare. But it was in comedy that the Restoration made its great contribution to English drama. Early in the 1660's Etherege won the town with his sprightly, satirical comedies in prose, soon to be followed by the splendid prose plays of Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, and Congreve, the four

supreme wits of Restoration comedy. Their spirit pervades the best of English comedy, through Fielding, Sheridan, and Goldsmith, down to Wilde and Shaw.

In poetry the century witnessed the change from the imaginative Elizabethan manner to the more artificial formalism of Dryden and Pope. Different in temper as these two poles seem to be, they have, nevertheless, a direct connection in the person of Ben Jonson. He of all the Elizabethans was most classical, most precise in workmanship. Around him gathered a number of rising poets, the "sons of Ben." Those who followed him directly or indirectly in his admiration for Anacreon, Catullus, and Horace, and composed variations on the theme of *carpe diem*, are the Cavalier poets, like Carew, Suckling, Lovelace, and particularly Herrick, most of whom were attached to the court. Those who developed still more intricately his use of "conceits," or far-fetched figures of speech, are the "metaphysical poets." Their leader was Donne, who was exactly the same age as Jonson. Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan produced some of the finest religious and mystical poetry in the language. Another group of writers, who also owed something to Jonson, developed the heroic couplet, the medium of poetic expression for the Restoration period that blank verse had been for the Elizabethan. Chief among them were Edmund Waller and Sir Charles Denham. Cowley, who also wrote couplets, did much to perfect the ode in English. The glory of the period was Milton, a majestic figure in English literature. In him are combined the vigorous imagination of the Elizabethan and the nobility, even the austerity, of the Puritan. In an age when poets were favoring the heroic couplet, he produced the greatest blank verse since Shakespeare. In an age which was becoming more and more rigidly neo-classic, his imagination conceived the sublime *Paradise Lost*.

The Elizabethan era was essentially the age of poetry. The seventeenth century is often called the "age of prose." During the century, especially in the latter half, reason supplanted imagination, and the language of reason is prose. The scientific speculation and philosophizing of Bacon were continued in Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, Thomas Hobbes, and Milton. Thomas Fuller, Richard Baxter, and Jeremy Taylor discussed religion. Izaak Walton wrote his inimitable descriptions of nature and the lives of the poets. The prose fashioned by these writers was worthy of the high standard set by the translators of the King James version of the Bible. It was direct and exact, yet not totally devoid of imagination, and, above all, it had beautiful cadence. Before the close of the century, Dryden, by many considered the father of modern English prose, wrote his critical essays and prefaces, Bunyan his *Pilgrim's Progress*, 1678, 1684, Pepys and Evelyn their diaries, Isaac Newton, *Principia*, 1687, and John Locke, *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*, 1690. As the century turned, Defoe, Swift, Addison, and Steele were beginning their contributions to the history of English prose.

Good summaries of seventeenth-century literature may be found in J. H. B. Masterman, *The Age of Milton* (Bell), and R. Garnett, *The Age of Dryden* (Bell). For appreciative criticism, see B. Wendell, *The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature* (Scribners), and E. Gosse, *Seventeenth-Century Studies* (Dodd, Mead & Co.).

FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626)

Francis Bacon was born at London January 22, 1561. He was the son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, who occupied the position of Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Queen Elizabeth. Francis entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1573, where he began his scientific studies. He went on to Gray's Inn, London, where he studied law, and was admitted as barrister. He sought long and earnestly for court patronage under Queen Elizabeth, but though he was supported by the Queen's favorite, the Earl of Essex, he failed of preferment. When the Earl of Essex fell out with the Queen and entered into treasonable designs against her, Bacon deserted him, and at his trial acted as one of the prosecutors. This began his career of court favor, which was continued under James I. He was a member of Parliament. He became Attorney-General in 1613, and five years later Lord Chancellor and Baron Verulam. In 1620, however, he was accused in Parliament of having taken presents from persons whose cases were pending before him, and confessed his guilt. He was sentenced to lose his offices, and pay a heavy fine, which was remitted by the king. He lived in retirement until his death in 1626.

Bacon was a literary man primarily because he used literature as a means to forward his attempt to bring about a new experimental attitude toward knowledge. To this end he wrote his chief work, the *Instauratio Magna*, in Latin, the language of the learned. Part of this forms the English work on *The Advancement of Learning*. Bacon's place in English literature belongs to him by his authorship of the Essays. These appeared in their first form as a "set of dispersed meditations" in 1597. They were only ten in number. They were expanded in style and increased in number to the final edition of fifty-eight in 1625. They are brief comments on life, couched in a style sometimes pithy and sententious, sometimes gorgeous and ornate. They represent the realistic

interest of the age in human life, and reflect its habit of distinction and originality in expression. Bacon's works are collected in the large edition of Ellis, Spedding, and Heath. The Essays have passed through many modern editions, among which those by E. A. Abbott and Miss Mary Augusta Scott may be mentioned. The standard life is by J. Spedding. A brief biography by R. W. Church appears in the English Men of Letters Series. See also Macaulay's essay.

ESSAYS OR COUNSELS CIVIL AND MORAL

I OF TRUTH

What is truth? said jesting Pilate;¹ and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be² that delight in giddiness,³ and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind⁴ be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing⁵ wits which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labor which men take in finding out of truth; nor again that when it is found it imposeth upon men's thoughts; that doth bring lies in favor; but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the later school⁶ of the Grecians examineth the matter and is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies, where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell; this same truth is a naked and open day-light, that doth not show the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that sheweth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that sheweth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would,⁷ and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? One of the fathers,⁸ in great severity, called poesy *vinum dæmonum*,⁹ because it filleth the imagination; and yet it

is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in and setteth in it, that doth the hurt; such as we spake of before. But howsoever¹ these things are thus in men's depraved judgments and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason; and his sabbath work ever since is the illumination of his Spirit. First he breathed light upon the face of the matter or chaos; then he breathed light into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light into the face of his chosen. The poet² that beautified the sect³ that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: *It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below; but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth* (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), *and to see the errors and wanderings and mists and tempests in the vale below;* so⁴ always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn⁵ upon the poles of truth.

To pass from theological and philosophical truth to the truth of civil business; it will be acknowledged even by those that practise it not, that clear and round dealing is the honor of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious. And therefore Mon-

1 John xviii. 38.

3 i.e., of thought.

2 there are those.

4 The skeptics, who believed that only relative truth was possible.

5 rambling.

6 Lucian, born about 120 A.D., who attacked with satire all the shams of his day.

7 wished.

8 St. Augustine, 354-430 A.D.

9 devil's wine.

1 notwithstanding.

2 Lucretius, 99-55 B.C.

3 The Epicureans.

4 provided.

5 The terms are taken from Ptolemaic astronomy.

taigne¹ saith prettily, when he inquired the reason why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace and such an odious charge. Saith he, *If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men.* For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man. Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold² that when Christ cometh, *he shall not find faith upon the earth.*

2

OF DEATH

Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. Certainly, the contemplation of death, as the wages of sin and passage to another world, is holy and religious; but the fear of it, as a tribute due unto nature, is weak. Yet in religious meditations there is sometimes mixture of vanity and of superstition. You shall read in some of the friars' books of mortification,³ that a man should think with himself what the pain is if he have but his finger's end pressed or tortured, and thereby imagine what the pains of death are, when the whole body is corrupted and dissolved; when many times death passeth with less pain than the torture of a limb; for the most vital parts are not the quickest of sense. And by him⁴ that spake only as a philosopher and natural man, it was well said, *Pompa mortis magis terret, quam mors ipsa.*⁵ Groans and convulsions, and a discolored face, and friends weeping,⁶ and blacks,⁶ and obsequies, and the like, show death terrible. It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the mind of man so weak, but it mates⁷ and masters the fear of death; and therefore death is no such terrible enemy when a man hath so many attendants about him that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honor aspireth to it; grief flieth to it; fear pre-occupateth⁸ it; nay, we read, after Otho the emperor⁹ had slain himself, pity (which is the tenderest of affec-

tions) provoked many to die, out of mere compassion to their sovereign, and as the truest sort of followers. Nay, Seneca adds niceness and satiety: *Cogita quamdiu eadem feceris; mori velle, non tantum fortis, aut miser, sed etiam fastidiosus potest.*¹ A man would die, though he were neither valiant nor miserable, only upon a weariness to do the same thing so oft over and over. It is no less worthy to observe, how little alteration in good spirits the approaches of death make; for they appear to be the same men till the last instant. Augustus Cæsar died in a compliment: *Livia, conjugii nostri memor, vive et vale.*² Tiberius in dissimulation; as Tacitus³ saith of him, *Jam Tiberium vires et corpus, non dissimulatio, deserebant.*⁴ Vespasian in a jest, sitting upon the stool; *Ut puto deus fio.*⁵ Galba with a sentence; *Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani;*⁶ holding forth his neck. Septimius Severus in despatch; *Adeste si quid mihi restat agendum.*⁷ And the like. Certainly the Stoics⁸ bestowed too much cost upon death, and by their great preparations made it appear more fearful. Better saith he,⁹ *qui finem vite extremum inter munera ponat nature.*¹⁰ It is as natural to die as to be born; and to a little infant, perhaps, the one is as painful as the other. He that dies in an earnest pursuit, is like one that is wounded in hot blood; who, for the time, scarce feels the hurt; and therefore a mind fixed and bent upon somewhat that is good doth avert the dolours of death. But, above all, believe it, the sweetest canticle is, *Nunc dimittis;*¹¹ when a man hath obtained worthy ends and expectations. Death hath this also; that it openeth the gate to good fame, and extinguisheth envy. *Extinctus amabitur idem.*¹²

5

OF ADVERSITY

It was an high speech of Seneca (after the manner of the Stoics), *that the good things*

¹ I Think how long you have done the same things; a man may wish to die, not so much because he is brave or wretched, but because he is tired of living.

² Livia, remember our marriage, live on, and farewell.

³ The Roman historian, c. 54-C. 116 A.D.

⁴ Strength and vigor left Tiberius, but not his ability to dissimulate.

⁵ As I see it, I am becoming a god.

⁶ Strike, if it be for the good of the Roman people.

⁷ Be at hand, in case there is anything more for me to do.

⁸ The Stoics taught resignation.

⁹ Juvenal, the Roman satirist, of the first century, A.D.

¹⁰ Who considers the cessation of life as one of nature's blessings.

¹¹ St. Luke II, 29: Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.

¹² The same man who was hated when alive will be loved when he is dead.

¹ The great French essayist and skeptic, 1533-92.

² St. Luke XVIII, 8.

³ Seneca, Stoic philosopher and dramatist, 4-65 A.D., in his *Epistles*.

⁴ The surroundings of death are more terrifying than death itself.

⁵ black clothing. ⁶ overcomes. ⁷ anticipates.

⁸ Marcus Salvius Otho, Roman emperor, 32-69 A.D.

which belong to prosperity are to be wished; but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired.¹ *Bona rerum secundarum optabilia; adversarum mirabilia.* Certainly if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is yet a higher speech of his than the other (much too high for a heathen), *It is true greatness to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God. Vere magnum habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei.* This would have done better in poesy, where transcendences are more allowed. And the poets indeed have been busy with it; for it is in effect the thing which is figured in that strange fiction of the ancient poets, which seemeth not to be without mystery;² nay, and to have some approach to the state of a Christian; that *Hercules, when he went to unbind Prometheus* (by whom human nature is represented), *sailed the length of the great ocean in an earthen pot or pitcher;* lively describing Christian resolution, that saileth in the frail bark of the flesh through the waves of the world. But to speak in a mean.³ The virtue of prosperity is temperance; the virtue of adversity is fortitude; which in morals is the more heroic virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New; which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp,⁴ you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needle-works and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground: judge therefore of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.

7

OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The joys of parents are secret; and so are their griefs and fears. They cannot utter the one; nor they will not utter the other. Chil-

dren sweeten labors; but they make misfortunes more bitter. They increase the cares of life; but they mitigate the remembrance of death. The perpetuity by generation is common to beasts; but memory, merit, and noble works are proper to men. And surely a man shall see the noblest works and foundations have proceeded from childless men; which have sought to express the images of their minds, where those of their bodies have failed. So the care of posterity is most in them that have no posterity. They that are the first raisers of their houses are most indulgent towards their children; beholding them as the continuance not only of their kind but of their work; and so both children and creatures.

The difference in affection of parents towards their several children is many times unequal; and sometimes unworthy; especially in the mother; as Solomon saith,¹ *A wise son rejoiceth the father, but an ungracious son shames the mother.* A man shall see, where there is a house full of children, one or two of the eldest respected, and the youngest made wantons;² but in the midst some that are as it were forgotten, who many times nevertheless prove the best. The illiberality of parents in allowance towards their children is an harmful error; makes them base; acquaints them with shifts; makes them sort with mean company; and makes them surfeit more when they come to plenty. And therefore the proof is best, when men keep their authority towards their children, but not their purse. Men have a foolish manner (both parents and schoolmasters and servants) in creating and breeding an emulation between brothers during childhood, which many times sorteth to discord when they are men, and disturbeth families. The Italians make little difference between children and nephews or near kinsfolks; but so they be of the lump, they care not though they pass not through their own body. And, to say truth, in nature it is much a like matter; insomuch that we see a nephew sometimes resemble an uncle or a kinsman more than his own parent; as the blood happens.³ Let parents choose betimes the vocations and courses they mean their children should take; for then they are most flexible; and let them not too much apply themselves to the disposition of their children, as thinking they will take best to that which they have most

¹ Proverbs, X, 1.

² spoiled children; etymologically, *wanton* is the equivalent of modern German *ungezogen* (untrained).

¹ wondered at.

² underlying meaning.

³ directly, simply.

⁴ The Psalms. ⁵ dark.

mind to. It is true, that if the affection ¹ or aptness of the children be extraordinary, then it is good not to cross it; but generally the precept is good, *optimum elige, suave et facile illud faciet consuetudo*.² Younger brothers are commonly fortunate, but seldom or never where the elder are disinherited.

8

OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE

He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are, who though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account future times impertinences. Nay, there are some other that account wife and children but as bills of charges. Nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous men, that take a pride in having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer. For perhaps they have heard some talk, *Such an one is a great rich man*, and another except to it, *Yea, but he hath a great charge of children*; as if it were an abatement to his riches. But the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous³ minds, which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away; and almost all fugitives are of that condition. A single life doth well with churchmen; for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool. It is indifferent for judges and magistrates; for if they be facile and corrupt, you shall have a servant five times worse than a wife. For soldiers, I find the generals commonly in their hortatives put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks maketh the vulgar soldier more base. Certainly wife and children are a kind of

of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses, *vetulam suam prætulit immortalitati*.¹ Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds both of chastity and obedience in the wife, if she think her husband wise; which she will never do if she find him jealous. Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses. So as a man may have a quarrel² to marry when he will. But yet he³ was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question, when a man should marry — *A young man not yet, an elder man not at all*. It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives; whether it be that it raiseth the price of their husband's kindness when it comes; or that the wives take a pride in their patience. But this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent; for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

IO

OF LOVE

The stage is more beholding to love, than the life of man. For as to the stage, love is ever matter of comedies, and now and then of tragedies; but in life it doth much mischief; sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury. You may observe that amongst all the great and worthy persons (whereof the memory remaineth, either ancient or recent) there is not one that hath been transported to the mad degree of love: which shows that great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion. You must except nevertheless Marcus Antonius,⁴ the half partner of the empire of Rome, and Appius Claudius,⁵ the decemvir and lawgiver; whereof the former was indeed a voluptuous man, and inordinate; but the latter was an austere and wise man; and therefore it seems (though rarely) that love can find entrance not only into an open heart, but also into a heart well

¹ tendency.

² Choose the best; custom will make it pleasant and easy.

³ capricious.

¹ He preferred his aged wife to immortality.

² reason.

³ Thales, the Greek philosopher, 640–546 B.C.

⁴ The lover of Cleopatra.

⁵ Who was in love with Virginia, a plebeian.

fortified, if watch be not well kept. It is a poor saying of Epicurus;¹ *Satis magnum alteri theatrum sumus*;² as if man, made for the contemplation of heaven and all noble objects, should do nothing but kneel before a little idol, and make himself a subject, though not of the mouth (as beasts are), yet of the eye; which was given him for higher purposes. It is a strange thing to note the excess of this passion, and how it braves the nature and value of things, by this; that the speaking in a perpetual hyperbole is comely in nothing but in love. Neither is it merely in the phrase; for whereas it hath been well said that the arch-flatterer, with whom all the petty flatterers have intelligence, is a man's self; certainly the lover is more. For there was never proud man thought so absurdly well of himself as the lover doth of the person loved; and therefore it was well said, *That it is impossible to love and to be wise*. Neither doth this weakness appear to others only, and not to the party loved; but to the loved most of all, except the love be reciprocal.³ For it is a true rule, that love is ever rewarded either with the reciproque or with an inward and secret contempt. By how much the more men ought to beware of this passion, which loseth not only other things, but itself! As for the other losses, the poet's relation doth well figure them: that he⁴ that preferred Helena quitted the gifts of Juno and Pallas. For whosoever esteemeth too much of amorous affection quitteth both riches and wisdom. This passion hath his floods in the very times of weakness; which are great prosperity and great adversity; though this latter hath been less observed: both which times kindle love, and make it more fervent, and therefore show it to be the child of folly. They do best, who if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarter;⁵ and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life; for if it check⁶ once with business, it troubleth men's fortunes, and maketh men that they can no ways be true to their own ends. I know not how, but martial men are given to love: I think it is but as they are given to wine; for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures. There is in man's nature a secret inclination and motion towards love of others, which if it be not spent upon some one or a few, doth naturally spread itself towards many, and

maketh men become humane and charitable; as it is seen sometime in friars. Nuptial love maketh mankind; friendly love perfecteth it; but wanton love corrupteth and embaseth it.

II

OF GREAT PLACE

Men in great place are thrice servants: servants of the sovereign or state; servants of fame; and servants of business. So as they have no freedom; neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. It is a strange desire, to seek power and to lose liberty: or to seek power over others and to lose power over a man's self. The rising unto place is laborious; and by pains men come to greater pains; and it is sometimes base; and by indignities men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall, or at least an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing. *Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere*.¹ Nay, retire men cannot when they would, neither will they when it were reason; but are impatient of privateness, even in age and sickness, which require the shadow; like old townsmen, that will be still sitting at their street door, though thereby they offer age to scorn. Certainly great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions, to think themselves happy; for if they judge by their own feeling, they cannot find it: but if they think with themselves what other men think of them, and that other men would fain be as they are, then they are happy as it were by report; when perhaps they find the contrary within. For they are the first that find their own griefs, though they be the last that find their own faults. Certainly men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the puzzle of business they have no time to tend their health either of body or mind. *Illi mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi*.² In place there is license to do good and evil; whereof the latter is a curse: for in evil the best condition is not to will; the second, not to can.³ But power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring. For good thoughts (though God accept them) yet towards men are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be

¹ The Greek philosopher, 342-270 B.C., who believed that the greatest good is pleasure.

² We are a big enough show to one another.

³ Reciprocal. ⁴ Paris.

⁵ keep its place. ⁶ interfere.

¹ Since you are not what you were, there is no reason why you should desire to live.

² Death is a sad misfortune to him who dies too well known to everybody, but unknown to himself.

³ know, know how.

without power and place, as the vantage and commanding ground. Merit and good works is the end of man's motion; and conscience¹ of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest. For if a man can be partaker of God's theatre, he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest. *Et conversus Deus, ut aspiceret opera quæ fecerunt manus suæ, vidit quod omnia essent bona nimis;*² and then the sabbath. In the discharge of thy place set before thee the best examples; for imitation is a globe of precepts. And after a time set before thee thine own example; and examine thyself strictly whether thou didst not best at first. Neglect not also the examples of those that have carried themselves ill in the same place; not to set off thyself by taxing their memory, but to direct thyself what to avoid. Reform therefore, without bravery³ or scandal of former times and persons; but yet set it down to thyself as well to create good precedents as to follow them. Reduce things to the first institution, and observe wherein and how they have degenerate; but yet ask counsel of both times; of the ancient time, what is best; and of the latter time, what is fittest. Seek to make thy course regular, that men may know beforehand what they may expect; but be not too positive and peremptory; and express thyself well when thou digressest from thy rule. Preserve the right of thy place; but stir not questions of jurisdiction: and rather assume thy right in silence and *de facto*,⁴ than voice it with claims and challenges. Preserve likewise the rights of inferior places; and think it more honor to direct in chief than to be busy in all. Embrace and invite helps and advices touching the execution of thy place; and do not drive away such as bring thee information, as meddlers; but accept of them in good part. The vices of authority are chiefly four: delays, corruption, roughness, and facility.⁵ For delays: give easy access; keep times appointed; go through with that which is in hand, and interlace not business but of necessity. For corruption: do not only bind thine own hands or thy servants' hands from taking, but bind the hands of suitors also from offering. For integrity used doth the one; but integrity professed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth the other. And avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion. Whosoever is found variable, and changeth

manifestly without manifest cause, giveth suspicion of corruption. Therefore always when thou changest thine opinion or course, profess it plainly, and declare it, together with the reasons that move thee to change; and do not think to steal¹ it. A servant or a favorite, if he be inward, and no other apparent cause of esteem, is commonly thought but a by-way to close² corruption. For roughness: it is a needless cause of discontent: severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate. Even reproofs from authority ought to be grave, and not taunting. As for facility: it is worse than bribery. For bribes come but now and then; but if importunity or idle respects lead a man, he shall never be without. As Solomon saith,³ *To respect persons is not good; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread.* It is most true that was anciently spoken, *A place showeth the man.* And it showeth some to the better, and some to the worse. *Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset,*⁴ saith Tacitus of Galba; but of Vespasian he saith, *Solus imperantium, Vespasianus mutatus in melius;*⁵ though the one was meant of sufficiency,⁶ the other of manners and affection. It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit, whom honor amends. For honor is, or should be, the place of virtue; and as in nature things move violently to their place and calmly in their place, so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm. All rising to great place is by a winding stair; and if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self whilst he is in the rising, and to balance himself when he is placed. Use the memory of thy predecessor fairly and tenderly; for if thou dost not, it is a debt will sure be paid when thou art gone. If thou have colleagues, respect them, and rather call them when they look not for it, than exclude them when they have reason to look to be called. Be not too sensible or too remembering of thy place in conversation and private answers to suitors; but let it rather be said, *When he sits in place he is another man.*

I 2

OF BOLDNESS

It is a trivial grammar-school text, but yet worthy a wise man's consideration.

1 hide.

2 secret.

3 Proverbs, xxviii, 21.

4 A man whom everybody would have considered as able to govern, if he had not been an emperor.

5 Vespasian was the only emperor who changed for the better.

6 capacity, ability.

1 consciousness.

2 And God turned to gaze upon the works which his hands had made, and he saw that they were all very good.

3 bravado.

4 as a matter of course.

5 softness, lack of backbone.

Question was asked of Demosthenes,¹ *what was the chief part of an orator?* he answered, *action*; what next? *action*; what next again? *action*. He said it that knew it best, and had by nature himself no advantage in that he commended. A strange thing, that that part of an orator which is but superficial, and rather the virtue of a player, should be placed so high, above those other noble parts of invention, elocution, and the rest; nay almost alone, as if it were all in all. But the reason is plain. There is in human nature generally more of the fool than of the wise; and therefore those faculties by which the foolish part of men's minds is taken are most potent. Wonderful like is the case of boldness, in civil business: what first? boldness; what second and third? boldness. And yet boldness is a child of ignorance and baseness, far inferior to other parts. But nevertheless it doth fascinate and bind hand and foot those that are either shallow in judgment or weak in courage, which are the greatest part; yea and prevaieth with wise men at weak times. Therefore we see it hath done wonders in popular states; but with senates and princes less; and more ever upon the first entrance of bold persons into action than soon after; for boldness is an ill keeper of promise. Surely as there are mountebanks for the natural body, so are there mountebanks for the politic body; men that undertake great cures, and perhaps have been lucky in two or three experiments, but want the grounds of science, and therefore cannot hold out. Nay, you shall see a bold fellow many times do Mahomet's miracle. Mahomet made the people believe that he would call an hill to him, and from the top of it offer up his prayers for the observers of his law. The people assembled; Mahomet called the hill to come to him, again and again; and when the hill stood still, he was never a whit abashed, but said, *If the hill will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the hill*. So these men, when they have promised great matters and failed most shamefully, yet (if they have the perfection of boldness) they will but slight it over, and make a turn, and no more ado. Certainly to men of great judgment, bold persons are a sport to behold; nay and to the vulgar also, boldness has somewhat of the ridiculous. For if absurdity be the subject of laughter, doubt you not but great boldness is seldom without some absurdity. Especially it is a sport to see, when a bold fellow

is out of countenance; for that puts his face into a most shrunken and wooden posture; as needs it must; for in bashfulness the spirits do a little go and come; but with bold men, upon like occasion, they stand at a stay; like a stale² at chess, where it is no mate, but yet the game cannot stir. But this last were fitter for a satire than for a serious observation. This is well to be weighed; that boldness is ever blind; for it seeth not dangers and inconveniences. Therefore it is ill in counsel, good in execution; so that the right use of bold persons is, that they never command in chief, but be seconds, and under the direction of others. For in counsel it is good to see dangers; and in execution not to see them, except they be very great.

17

OF SUPERSTITION

It were better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of him. For the one is unbelief, the other is contumely; and certainly superstition is the reproach of the Deity. Plutarch³ saith well to that purpose: *Surely (saith he) I had rather a great deal men should say there was no such man at all as Plutarch, than that they should say that there was one Plutarch that would eat his children as soon as they were born; as the poets speak of Saturn*. And as the contumely is greater towards God, so the danger is greater towards men. Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation; all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not; but superstition dismounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men. Therefore atheism did never perturb states; for it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no further: and we see the times inclined to atheism (as the time of Augustus Cæsar) were civil⁴ times. But superstition hath been the confusion of many states, and bringeth in a new *primum mobile*,⁵ that ravisheth all the spheres of government. The master of superstition is the people; and in all superstition wise men follow fools; and arguments are fitted to practice, in a reversed order. It was gravely said by some of the prelates

¹ stalemate, a situation in chess where the king is unable to move without moving into check.

² Greek historian of the first century A.D., author of the famous *Lives* and the *Morals*, essays from which Bacon derived much.

³ peaceful.

⁴ In Ptolemaic astronomy, the outermost revolving sphere which enclosed the universe.

⁵ 1 The great Greek orator, 384-322 B.C.

in the Council of Trent,¹ where the doctrine of the Schoolmen bare great sway, *that the Schoolmen were like astronomers, which did feign eccentric and epicycles, and such engines*² of orbs, to save the phenomena;³ though they knew there were no such things; and in like manner, that the Schoolmen had framed a number of subtle and intricate axioms and theorems, to save the practice of the church. The causes of superstition are: pleasing and sensual rites and ceremonies; excess of outward and pharisaical holiness; over-great reverence of traditions, which cannot but load the church; the stratagems of prelates for their own ambition and lucre; the favoring too much of good intentions, which openeth the gate to conceits and novelties; the taking an aim at divine matters by human, which cannot but breed mixture of imaginations; and, lastly, barbarous times, especially joined with calamities and disasters. Superstition, without a veil, is a deformed thing; for as it addeth deformity to an ape to be so like a man, so the similitude of superstition to religion makes it the more deformed. And as wholesome meat corrupteth to little worms, so good forms and orders corrupt into a number of petty observances. There is a superstition in avoiding superstition, when men think to do best if they go furthest from the superstition formerly received; therefore care would be had that (as it fareth in ill purgings) the good be not taken away with the bad; which commonly is done when the people is the reformer.

Beon was said from superstition

18

OF TRAVEL

Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education, in the elder, a part of experience. He that travelleth into a country before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel. That young men travel under some tutor, or grave servant, I allow⁴ well; so that he be such a one that hath the language, and hath been in the country before; whereby he may be able to tell them what things are worthy to be seen in the country where they go; what acquaintances they are to seek; what exercises or discipline the place yieldeth. For else young men shall go hooded, and look abroad little.

¹ This council, 1545-63, decided against the reforms of the Protestants.

² devices.

³ That is, medieval philosophers simply invented theories to explain the causes of natural phenomena which they did not understand.

⁴ approve.

It is a strange thing, that in sea voyages, where there is nothing to be seen but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land-travel, wherein so much is to be observed, for the most part they omit it; as if chance were fitter to be registered than observation. Let diaries therefore be brought in use. The things to be seen and observed are: the courts of princes, specially when they give audience to ambassadors; the courts of justice, while they sit and hear causes; and so of consistories ecclesiastic; the churches and monasteries, with the monuments which are therein extant; the walls and fortifications of cities and towns, and so the havens and harbors; antiquities and ruins; libraries; colleges, disputations, and lectures, where any are; shipping and navies; houses and gardens of state and pleasure, near great cities; armories; arsenals; magazines; exchanges; burses; warehouses; exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers, and the like; comedies, such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort; treasures of jewels and robes; cabinets and rarities; and, to conclude, whatsoever is memorable in the places where they go. After all which the tutors or servants ought to make diligent inquiry. As for triumphs, masks, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such shows, men need not to be put in mind of them; yet are they not to be neglected. If you will have a young man to put his travel into a little room, and in short time to gather much, this you must do. First, as was said, he must have some entrance into the language before he goeth. Then he must have such a servant or tutor as knoweth the country, as was likewise said. Let him carry with him also some card¹ or book describing the country where he travellet; which will be a good key to his inquiry. Let him keep also a diary. Let him not stay long in one city or town; more or less as the place deserveth, but not long; nay, when he stayeth in one city or town, let him change his lodging from one end and part of the town to another; which is a great adamant² of acquaintance. Let him sequester himself from the company of his countrymen, and diet in such places where there is good company of the nation where he travelleth. Let him, upon his removes from one place to another, procure recommendation to some person of quality residing in the place whither he removeth; that he may use his favor in those things he desireth to see or know. Thus he may abridge his travel with much profit.

¹ chart.

² lodestone.

As for the acquaintance which is to be sought in travel; that which is most of all profitable is acquaintance with the secretaries and employed men of ambassadors; for so in travelling in one country he shall suck the experience of many. Let him also see and visit eminent persons in all kinds, which are of great name abroad; that he may be able to tell how the life agreeth with the fame. For quarrels, they are with care and discretion to be avoided. They are commonly for mistresses, healths,¹ place, and words. And let a man beware how he keepeth company with cholerick and quarrelsome persons; for they will engage him into their own quarrels. When a traveller returneth home, let him not leave the countries where he hath travelled altogether behind him; but maintain a correspondence by letters with those of his acquaintance which are of most worth. And let his travel appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse let him be rather advised in his answers, than forwards to tell stories; and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts; but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country.

23

OF WISDOM FOR A MAN'S SELF

An ant is a wise creature for itself, but it is a shrewd² thing in an orchard or garden. And certainly men that are great lovers of themselves waste the public. Divide with reason between self-love and society; and be so true to thyself, as thou be not false to others; specially to thy king and country. It is a poor centre of a man's actions, *himself*. It is right earth. For that only stands fast upon his own centre;³ whereas all things that have affinity with the heavens move upon the centre of another, which they benefit. The referring of all to a man's self is more tolerable in a sovereign prince; because themselves are not only themselves, but their good and evil is at the peril of the public fortune. But it is a desperate evil in a servant to a prince, or a citizen in a republic. For whatsoever affairs pass such a man's hands, he crooketh them to his own ends; which must needs be often eccentric to the ends of his master or state. Therefore let princes, or states, choose such servants as

have not this mark; except they mean their service should be made but the accessory. That which maketh the effect more pernicious is that all proportion is lost. It were disproportion enough for the servant's good to be preferred before the master's; but yet it is a greater extreme, when a little good of the servant shall carry things against a great good of the master's. And yet that is the case of bad officers, treasurers, ambassadors, generals, and other false and corrupt servants; which set a bias¹ upon their bowl, of their own petty ends and envies, to the overthrow of their master's great and important affairs. And for the most part, the good such servants receive is after the model of their own fortune; but the hurt they sell for that good is after the model of their master's fortune. And certainly it is the nature of extreme self-lovers, as they will set an house on fire, and it were but to roast their eggs; and yet these men many times hold credit with their masters, because their study is but to please them and profit themselves; and for either respect they will abandon the good of their affairs.

Wisdom for a man's self is, in many branches thereof, a depraved thing. It is the wisdom of rats, that will be sure to leave a house somewhat before it fall. It is the wisdom of the fox, that thrusts out the badger, who digged and made room for him. It is the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears when they would devour. But that which is specially to be noted is, that those which (as Cicero says of Pompey) are *sui amantes, sine rivali*² are many times unfortunate. And whereas they have all their times sacrificed to themselves, they become in the end themselves sacrifices to the inconstancy of fortune, whose wings they thought by their self-wisdom to have pinioned.

27

OF FRIENDSHIP

It had been hard for him³ that spake it to have put more truth and untruth together in few words, than in that speech, *Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god*. For it is most true that a natural and secret hatred and aversion towards⁴ society in any man, hath somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most untrue that it should have any character at all of the divine na-

¹ drinking of healths.² injurious.³ Bacon follows the Ptolemaic system of astronomy: i.e., that the earth was the center of the universe.⁴ Lead put in the side of a bowling ball to prevent its rolling true.² lovers of themselves, without a rival.³ Aristotle, in his *Politics*.⁴ aversion to.

ture; except it proceed, not out of a pleasure in solitude, but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self for a higher conversation: such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly in some of the heathen; as Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius¹ of Tyana; and truly and really in divers of the ancient hermits and holy fathers of the church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures; and talk but a tinkling cymbal,² where there is no love. The Latin adage meeteth with it a little: *Magna civitas, magna solitudo*;³ because in a great town friends are scattered; so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less neighborhoods. But we may go further, and affirm most truly that it is a mere⁴ and miserable solitude to want true friends; without which the world is but a wilderness; and even in this sense also of solitude, whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity.

A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which fashions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know diseases of stoppings and suffocations are the most dangerous in the body; and it is not much otherwise in the mind; you may take sarza⁵ to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flowers of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart, but a true friend; to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.

It is a strange thing to observe how high a rate great kings and monarchs do set upon this fruit of friendship whereof we speak: so great, as they purchase it many times at the hazard of their own safety and greatness. For princes, in regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit, except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be as it were companions and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience. The modern languages give unto such persons the name of

favorites, or privadoes;¹ as if it were matter of grace, or conversation. But the Roman name attaineth the true use and cause thereof, naming them *participes curarum*;² for it is that which tieth the knot. And we see plainly that this hath been done, not by weak and passionate princes only, but by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned; who have oftentimes joined to themselves some of their servants; whom both themselves have called friends, and allowed others likewise to call them in the same manner; using the word which is received between private men.

L. Sylla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey (after surnamed the Great) to that height, that Pompey vaunted himself for Sylla's over-match. For when he had carried the consulship for a friend of his, against the pursuit of Sylla, and that Sylla did a little resent thereat, and began to speak great, Pompey turned upon him again, and in effect bade him be quiet; for that more men adored the sun rising than the sun setting. With Julius Cæsar, Decimus Brutus had obtained that interest, as he set him down in his testament for heir in remainder after his nephew. And this was the man that had power with him to draw him forth to his death. For when Cæsar would have discharged the senate, in regard of some ill presages, and specially a dream of Calpurnia; this man lifted him gently by the arm out of his chair, telling him he hoped he would not dismiss the senate till his wife had dreamt a better dream. And it seemeth his favor was so great, as Antonius, in a letter which is recited *verbatim* in one of Cicero's Philippics, calleth him *venefica, witch*; as if he had enchanted Cæsar. Augustus raised Agrippa (though of mean birth) to that height, as when he consulted with Mæcenus³ about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Mæcenus took the liberty to tell him, that he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa, or take away his life; there was no third way, he had made him so great. With Tiberius Cæsar, Sejanus had ascended to that height, as they two were termed and reckoned as a pair of friends. Tiberius in a letter to him saith, *Hæc pro amicitia nostrâ non occultavi*;⁴ and the whole senate dedicated an altar to Friendship, as to a goddess, in respect of the great dearth of friendship between them

¹ All of these ancient philosophers and poets professed to love solitude. Numa was the second king of Rome; for Empedocles, the Greek philosopher and poet of Sicily (490-430 B.C.), see Matthew Arnold's poem.

² I Corinthians, XIII, 1.

³ A great city is great solitude.

⁴ absolute.

⁵ sarsaparilla.

¹ confidants, comrades.

² partners in cares.

³ The Roman statesman of the first century B.C., immortal as the patron of Virgil and Horace.

⁴ On account of our friendship, I have not concealed these matters (from you).

two. The like or more was between Septimius Severus and Plautianus. For he forced his eldest son to marry the daughter of Plautianus; and would often maintain Plautianus in doing affronts to his son; and did write also in a letter to the senate, by these words: *I love the man so well, as I wish he may over-live¹ me.* Now if these princes had been as a Trajan or a Marcus Aurelius, a man might have thought that this had proceeded of an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so wise, of such strength and severity of mind, and so extreme lovers of themselves, as all these were, it proveth most plainly that they found their own felicity (though as great as ever happened to mortal men) but as a half piece, except they mought have a friend to make it entire; and yet, which is more, they were princes that had wives, sons, nephews; and yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship.

It is not to be forgotten what Comineus² observeth of his first master, Duke Charles³ the Hardy; namely, that he would communicate his secrets with none; and least of all, those secrets which troubled him most. Whereupon he goeth on and saith that towards his latter time *that closeness did impair and a little perish his understanding.* Surely Comineus mought have made the same judgment also, if it had pleased him, of his second master, Lewis the Eleventh,⁴ whose closeness was indeed his tormentor. The parable of Pythagoras⁵ is dark, but true; *Cor ne edito: Eat not the heart.* Certainly, if a man would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends to open themselves unto are cannibals of their own hearts. But one thing is most admirable (wherewith I will conclude this first fruit of friendship), which is, that this communicating of a man's self to his friend works two contrary effects; *for it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halves.* For there is no man that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less. So that it is in truth of operation upon a man's mind, of like virtue as the alchemists use to attribute to their stone⁶ for man's body; that it worketh all contrary effects, but still to the good and benefit of nature. But yet without praying in aid of alchemists, there is a manifest image

of this in the ordinary course of nature. For in bodies, union strengtheneth and cherisheth any natural action; and on the other side weakeneth and dulleth any violent impression; and even so it is of minds.

[The second fruit of friendship is healthful and sovereign for the understanding, as the first is for the affections. For friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections, from storm and tempests; but it maketh daylight in the understanding, out of darkness and confusion of thoughts.] Neither is this to be understood only of faithful counsel, which a man receiveth from his friend; but before you come to that, certain it is that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up, in the communicating and discoursing with another; he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words: finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles to the king of Persia, *That speech was like cloth of Arras, opened and put abroad; whereby the imagery doth appear in figure; whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs.*¹ Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel; (they indeed are best;) but even without that, a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better relate himself to a statua or picture, than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother.

Add now, to make this second fruit of friendship complete, that other point which lieth more open and falleth within vulgar² observation; which is faithful counsel from a friend. Heraclitus³ saith well in one of his enigmas, *Dry light is ever the best.* And certain it is, that the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another is drier and purer than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment; which is ever infused and drenched in his affections and customs. So as there is as much difference between the counsel that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend and of a flatterer. For there is no such flatterer as is a man's self; and

¹ outlive.

² The French historian, Philippe de Comines, d. 1519.

³ Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, 1433-77.

⁴ King of France, 1461-83. (He appears in Scott's *Quentin Durward*.)

⁵ The Greek mathematician of the sixth century B.C.

⁶ The philosopher's stone.

¹ i.e., when the cloth is not spread out.

² common.

³ The Greek philosopher, c. 535-475 B.C.

there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self as the liberty of a friend. Counsel is of two sorts: the one concerning manners, the other concerning business. For the first, the best preservative to keep the mind in health is the faithful admonition of a friend. The calling of a man's self to a strict account is a medicine, sometime, too piercing and corrosive. Reading good books of morality is a little flat and dead. Observing our faults in others is sometimes improper for our case. But the best receipt (best, I say, to work, and best to take) is the admonition of a friend. It is a strange thing to behold what gross errors and extreme absurdities many (especially of the greater sort) do commit, for want of a friend to tell them of them; to the great damage both of their fame and fortune: for, as St. James saith,¹ they are as men *that look sometimes into a glass, and presently forget their own shape and favor.* As for business, a man may think, if he will, that two eyes see no more than one; or that a gamester seeth always more than a looker-on; or that a man in anger is as wise as he that hath said over the four and twenty² letters; or that a musket may be shot off as well upon the arm as upon a rest; and such other fond³ and high imaginations, to think himself all in all. But when all is done, the help of good counsel is that which setteth business straight. And if any man think that he will take counsel, but it shall be by pieces; asking counsel in one business of one man, and in another business of another man; it is well (that is to say, better perhaps than if he asked none at all); but he runneth two dangers: one, that he shall not be faithfully counselled; for it is a rare thing, except it be from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given, but such as shall be bowed and crooked to some ends which he hath that giveth it. The other, that he shall have counsel given, hurtful and unsafe (though with good meaning), and mixed partly of mischief and partly of remedy; even as if you would call a physician that is thought good for the cure of the disease you complain of, but is unacquainted with your body; and therefore may put you in way for a present cure, but overthroweth your health in some other kind; and so cure the disease and kill the patient. But a friend that is wholly acquainted with a man's estate will beware, by furthering any present business, how he dasheth upon other inconven-

ience. And therefore rest not upon scattered counsels; they will rather distract and mislead, than settle and direct.

After these two noble fruits of friendship (peace in the affections, and support of the judgment), followeth the last fruit; which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels; I mean aid and bearing a part in all actions and occasions. Here the best way to represent to life the manifold use of friendship is to cast and see how many things there are which a man cannot do himself; and then it will appear that it was a sparing speech of the ancients, to say, *that a friend is another himself*; for that a friend is far more than himself. Men have their time, and die many times in desire of some things which they principally take to heart; the bestowing of a child, the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man have a true friend, he may rest almost secure that the care of those things will continue after him. So that a man hath, as it were, two lives in his desires. A man hath a body, and that body is confined to a place; but where friendship is, all offices of life are as it were granted to him and his deputy. For he may exercise them by his friend. How many things are there which a man cannot, with any face or comeliness, say or do himself? A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them; a man cannot sometimes brook to supplicate or beg; and a number of the like. But all these things are graceful in a friend's mouth, which are blushing in a man's own. So again, a man's person hath many proper relations which he cannot put off. A man cannot speak to his son but as a father; to his wife but as a husband; to his enemy but upon terms; whereas a friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person. But to enumerate these things were endless; I have given the rule, where a man cannot fitly play his own part; if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage.

28

OF EXPENSE

Riches are for spending, and spending for honor and good actions. Therefore extraordinary expense must be limited by the worth of the occasion; for voluntary undoing may be as well for a man's country as for the kingdom of heaven. But ordinary expense ought to be limited by a man's estate; and governed with such regard, as it be within his compass; and not subject to deceit and

¹ James, I, 23, 24.

² In Bacon's day I and V were used for J and U.

³ foolish.

abuse of servants; and ordered to the best show, that the bills may be less than the estimation abroad. Certainly, if a man will keep but of even hand,¹ his ordinary expenses ought to be but to the half of his receipts; and if he think to wax rich, but to the third part. It is no baseness for the greatest to descend and look into their own estate. Some forbear it, not upon negligence alone, but doubting² to bring themselves into melancholy, in respect they shall find it broken. But wounds cannot be cured without searching. He that cannot look into his own estate at all, had need both choose well those whom he employeth, and change them often; for new are more timorous and less subtle. He that can look into his estate but seldom, it behooveth him to turn all to certainties.³ A man had need, if he be plentiful in some kind of expense, to be as saving again in some other. As if he be plentiful in diet, to be saving in apparel; if he be plentiful in the hall, to be saving in the stable; and the like. For he that is plentiful in expenses of all kinds will hardly be preserved from decay. In clearing⁴ of a man's estate, he may as well hurt himself in being too sudden, as in letting it run on too long. For hasty selling is commonly as disadvantageable as interest. Besides, he that clears at once will relapse; for finding himself out of straits, he will revert to his customs: but he that cleareth by degrees induceth a habit of frugality, and gaineth as well upon his mind as upon his estate. Certainly, who hath a state to repair, may not despise small things; and commonly it is less dishonorable to abridge petty charges, than to stoop to petty gettings. A man ought warily to begin charges which once begun will continue; but in matters that return not he may be more magnificent.

32

OF DISCOURSE

Some in their discourse desire rather commendation of wit, in being able to hold all arguments, than of judgment, in discerning what is true; as if it were a praise to know what might be said, and not what should be thought. Some have certain common places and themes wherein they are good, and want variety; which kind of poverty is for the most part tedious, and when it is once perceived, ridiculous. The honorablest part of talk is to give the occasion; and again to moderate

and pass to somewhat else; for then a man leads the dance. It is good, in discourse and speech of conversation, to vary and intermingle speech of the present occasion with arguments, tales with reasons, asking of questions with telling of opinions, and jest with earnest: for it is a dull thing to tire, and, as we say now, to jade, any thing too far. As for jest, there be certain things which ought to be privileged from it; namely, religion, matters of state, great persons, any man's present business of importance, and any case that deserveth pity. Yet there be some that think their wits have been asleep, except they dart out somewhat that is piquant, and to the quick. That is a vein which would be bridled;

Parce, puer, stimulis, et fortius utere loris.¹

And generally, men ought to find the difference between saltness and bitterness. Certainly, he that hath a satirical vein, as he maketh others afraid of his wit, so he had need be afraid of others' memory. He that questioneth much shall learn much, and content much; but especially if he apply his questions to the skill of the persons whom he asketh; for he shall give them occasion to please themselves in speaking, and himself shall continually gather knowledge. But let his questions not be troublesome; for that is fit for a poser.² And let him be sure to leave other men their turns to speak. Nay, if there be any that would reign and take up all the time, let him find means to take them off, and to bring others on; as musicians use to do with those that dance too long galliards.³ If you dissemble sometimes your knowledge of that you are thought to know, you shall be thought another time to know that you know not. Speech of a man's self ought to be seldom, and well chosen. I knew one was wont to say in scorn, *He must needs be a wise man, he speaks so much of himself;* and there is but one case wherein a man may commend himself with good grace; and that is in commending virtue in another; especially if it be such a virtue whereunto himself pretendeth. Speech of touch⁴ towards others should be sparingly used; for discourse ought to be as a field, without coming home to any man. I knew two noblemen, of the west part of England, whereof the one was given to scoff, but kept ever royal cheer in his house; the other would ask of those that had been at

¹ From Ovid: "spare the whip, boy, and hold the reins more tightly."

² examiner.

³ vigorous French dances.

⁴ personal remarks.

¹ balance his accounts.

² fearing.

³ fixed incomes and expenditures.

the other's table, *Tell truly, was there never a flout¹ or dry blow given?* To which the guest would answer, *Such and such a thing passed.* The lord would say, *I thought he would mar a good dinner.* Discretion of speech is more than eloquence; and to speak agreeably to him with whom we deal, is more than to speak in good words or in good order. A good continued speech, without a good speech of interlocution, shows slowness; and a good reply or second speech, without a good settled speech, showeth shallowness and weakness. As we see in beasts, that those that are weakest in the course are yet nimblest in the turn; as it is betwixt the greyhound and the hare. To use too many circumstances² ere one come to the matter, is wearisome; to use none at all, is blunt.

39

OF CUSTOM AND EDUCATION

Men's thoughts are much according to their inclination; their discourse and speeches according to their learning and infused opinions; but their deeds are after as they have been accustomed. And therefore, as Machiavel³ well noteth (though in an evil-favored instance), there is no trusting to the force of nature nor to the bravery of words, except it be corroborate by custom. His instance is, that for the achieving of a desperate conspiracy, a man should not rest upon the fierceness of any man's nature, or his resolute undertakings; but take such an one as hath had his hands formerly in blood. But Machiavel knew not of a Friar Clement,⁴ nor a Ravillac,⁵ nor a Jaureguy,⁶ nor a Baltazar Gerard; yet his rule holdeth still that nature, nor the engagement of words, are not so forcible as custom. Only superstition is now so well advanced, that men of the first blood are as firm as butchers by occupation; and votary⁷ resolution is made equipollent⁸ to custom even in matter of blood. In other things the predominancy of custom is everywhere visible; insomuch as a man would wonder to hear men profess, protest, engage, give great words, and then do just as they have done before; as if they were dead images, and engines moved only by the wheels of custom.

1 insult.

2 details.

3 Machiavelli, the celebrated Italian politician, 1469-1527, author of *The Prince and Discourses*.

4 Jacques Clément assassinated Henry III of France.

5 François Ravillac assassinated Henry IV of France in 1610.

6 Jaureguy attempted to assassinate William the Silent, Prince of Orange; Gérard succeeded, in 1584.

7 vowed.

8 equivalent.

We see also the reign or tyranny of custom, what it is. The Indians¹ (I mean the sect of their wise men) lay themselves quietly upon a stack of wood, and so sacrifice themselves by fire. Nay the wives strive to be burned with the corpses of their husbands. The lads of Sparta, of ancient time, were wont to be scourged upon the altar of Diana, without so much as queching.² I remember, in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's time of England, an Irish rebel condemned, put up a petition to the deputy that he might be hanged in a withe, and not in an halter; because it had been so used with former rebels. There be monks in Russia, for penance, that will sit a whole night in a vessel of water, till they be engaged with hard ice. Many examples may be put of the force of custom, both upon mind and body. Therefore, since custom is the principal magistrate of man's life, let men by all means endeavor to obtain good customs. Certainly custom is most perfect when it beginneth in young years: this we call education; which is, in effect, but an early custom. So we see, in languages the tongue is more pliant to all expressions and sounds, the joints are more supple to all feats of activity and motions, in youth than afterwards. For it is true that late learners cannot so well take the ply;³ except it be in some minds that have not suffered themselves to fix, but have kept themselves open and prepared to receive continual amendment, which is exceeding rare. But if the force of custom simple and separate be great, the force of custom copulate and conjoined and collegiate is far greater. For there example teacheth, company comforteth, emulation quickeneth, glory raiseth: so as in such places the force of custom is in his exaltation.⁴ Certainly the great multiplication of virtues upon human nature resteth upon societies well ordained and disciplined. For commonwealths and good governments do nourish virtue grown, but do not much mend the seeds. But the misery is, that the most effectual means are now applied to the ends least to be desired.

42

OF YOUTH AND AGE

A man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time. But that happeneth rarely. Generally, youth is like the first cogitations, not so wise as the second. For there is a youth in thoughts, as well as in

1 i.e., Hindus.

2 flinching.

3 be directed.

4 Astrological term; here, "at its greatest power."

ages. And yet the invention of young men is more lively than that of old; and imaginations stream into their minds better, and as it were more divinely. Natures that have much heat and great and violent desires and perturbations are not ripe for action till they have passed the meridian of their years; as it was with Julius Cæsar and Septimius Severus. Of the latter of whom it is said, *Juventutem egit erroribus, imo furoribus, plenam*.¹ And yet he was the ablest emperor, almost, of all the list. But reposed natures may do well in youth. As it is seen in Augustus Cæsar, Cosmus Duke of Florence, Gaston de Foix,² and others. On the other side, heat and vivacity in age is an excellent composition for business. Young men are fitter to invent than to judge; fitter for execution than for counsel; and fitter for new projects than for settled business. For the experience of age, in things that fall within the compass of it, directeth them; but in new things, abuseth³ them. The errors of young men are the ruin of business; but the errors of aged men amount but to this, that more might have been done, or sooner. Young men, in the conduct and manage of actions, embrace more than they can hold; stir more than they can quiet; fly to the end, without consideration of the means and degrees; pursue some few principles which they have chanced upon absurdly; care not to innovate,⁴ which draws unknown inconveniences; use extreme remedies at first; and that which doubleth all errors will not acknowledge or retract them; like an unready horse, that will neither stop nor turn. Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success. Certainly it is good to compound employments of both; for that will be good for the present, because the virtues of either age may correct the defects of both; and good for succession, that young men may be learners, while men in age are actors; and, lastly, good for extern⁵ accidents, because authority followeth old men, and favor and popularity youth. But for the moral part, perhaps youth will have the pre-eminence, as age hath for the politic. A certain rabbin,⁶ upon the text, *Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall*

dream dreams,¹ inferreth that young men are admitted nearer to God than old, because vision is a clearer revelation than a dream. And certainly, the more a man drinketh of the world, the more it intoxicateth; and age doth profit rather in the powers of understanding, than in the virtues of the will and affections. There be some have an over-earey ripeness in their years, which fadeth betimes. These are, first, such as have brittle wits, the edge whereof is soon turned; such as was Hermogenes² the rhetorician, whose books are exceeding subtle; who afterwards waxed stupid. A second sort is of those that have some natural dispositions which have better grace in youth than in age; such as is a fluent and luxuriant speech; which becomes youth well, but not age: so Tully³ saith of Hortensius,⁴ *Idem manebat, neque idem decebat*.⁵ The third is of such as take too high a strain at the first, and are magnanimous more than tract of years can uphold. As was Scipio Africanus, of whom Livy⁶ saith in effect, *Ultima primis cedebant*.⁷

47

OF NEGOTIATING

It is generally better to deal by speech than by letter; and by the mediation of a third than by a man's self. Letters are good, when a man would draw an answer by letter back again; or when it may serve for a man's justification afterwards to produce his own letter; or where it may be danger to be interrupted, or heard by pieces. To deal in person is good, when a man's face breedeth regard, as commonly with inferiors; or in tender cases, where a man's eye upon the countenance of him with whom he speaketh may give him a direction how far to go; and generally, where a man will reserve to himself liberty either to disavow or to expound. In choice of instruments, it is better to choose men of a plainer sort, that are like to do that is committed to them, and to report back again faithfully the success, than those that are cunning to contrive out of other men's business somewhat to grace themselves, and will help the matter in report for satisfaction's sake. Use also such persons as affect the business wherein they are em-

¹ He passed his entire youth in errors, or rather, mad acts.

² Duc de Nemours, an able French general, killed in battle at Ravenna in 1512.

³ misleads.

⁴ i.e., they are not careful how they innovate.

⁵ outside. ⁶ rabbi.

¹ Joel, II, 28.

² A Greek prodigy of the second century A.D.

³ Cicero.

⁴ A Roman orator, Cicero's contemporary.

⁵ He remained the same, when the same was no longer becoming to him.

⁶ The excellent Roman historian, 59 B.C.—17 A.D.

⁷ His last acts were not up to his first.

ployed; for that quickeneth much; and such as are fit for the matter; as bold men for expostulation, fair-spoken men for persuasion, crafty men for inquiry and observation, forward and absurd ¹ men for business that doth not well bear out itself.² Use also such as have been lucky, and prevailed before in things wherein you have employed them; for that breeds confidence, and they will strive to maintain their prescription.³ It is better to sound a person with whom one deals afar off, than to fall upon the point at first; except you mean to surprise him by some short question. It is better dealing with men in appetite,⁴ than with those that are where they would be. If a man deal with another upon conditions, the start or first performance ⁵ is all; which a man cannot reasonably demand, except either the nature of the thing be such, which must go before; or else a man can persuade the other party that he shall still need him in some other thing; or else that he be counted the honestest man. All practice ⁶ is to discover, or to work. Men discover themselves in trust, in passion, at unawares, and of necessity, when they would have somewhat done and cannot find an apt pretext. If you would work any man, you must either know his nature and fashions, and so lead him; or his ends, and so persuade him; or his weakness and disadvantages, and so awe him; or those that have interest in him, and so govern him. In dealing with cunning persons, we must ever consider their ends, to interpret their speeches; and it is good to say little to them, and that which they least look for. In all negotiations of difficulty, a man may not look to sow and reap at once; but must prepare business, and so ripen it by degrees.

50

OF STUDIES

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth;

to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience; for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need proyning,¹ by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously;² and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy³ things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that ⁴ he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty;⁵ the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. *Abeunt studia in mores.*⁶ Nay, there is no stond ⁷ or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins;⁸ shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are *cymini sectores*.⁹ If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

1 unreasonable.

2 justify itself.

3 reputation, i.e., of being lucky.

4 eager, ambitious.

5 i.e., which of the two men shall carry out his agreement first.

6 dealing.

1 pruning, cultivating.

2 carefully.

3 tasteless.

4 what.

5 Poets make men witty, i.e., full of fancy, imaginative.

6 Studies develop into fancies (Ovid).

7 obstruction.

8 kidneys.

9 hair-splitters.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LYRICS

GEORGE WITHER

(1588-1667)

Wither was a militant Puritan, but far from somber or bigoted. His steadily increasing reputation as a poet is based upon his keen satire, *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, 1613; his pastorals, *The Shepherd's Hunting*, 1615, and *Fair Virtue*, 1622; and his religious lyrics, published under the title of *Hallelujah* in 1641. As a poet he displays genuine lyrical feeling. The poems here given display his lighter mood.

SHALL I, WASTING IN DESPAIR

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die, because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care,
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day, 5
Or the flowery meads in May!
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be?

Should my heart be grieved or pined,
'Cause I see a woman kind? 10
Or a well disposed nature
Joined with a lovely feature?
Be she meeker, kinder than
Turtle dove, or pelican!
If she be not so to me, 15
What care I how kind she be?

Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?
Or her well deserving known,
Make me quite forget mine own? 20
Be she with that goodness blest
Which may gain her, name of best!
If she be not such to me,
What care I how good she be?

'Cause her fortune seems too high, 25
Shall I play the fool, and die?
Those that bear a noble mind,
Where they want of riches find,
Think "What, with them, they would do
That, without them, dare to woo!" 30
And unless that mind I see,
What care I though great she be?

Great, or good, or kind, or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair!
If she love me (this believe!) 35
I will die, ere she shall grieve!
If she slight me, when I woo,
I can scorn, and let her go!

For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be? 40

I LOVED A LASS

I loved a lass, a fair one,
As fair as e'er was seen;
She was indeed a rare one,
Another Sheba Queen.
But, fool as then I was, 5
I thought she loved me too;
But now, alas! she's left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

Her hair like gold did glisten,
Each eye was like a star, 10
She did surpass her sister,
Which passed all others far.
She would me honey call,
She'd — O she'd kiss me too!
But now, alas! she's left me, 15
Falero, lero, loo!

Many a merry meeting
My love and I have had;
She was my only sweeting,
She made my heart full glad. 20
The tears stood in her eyes
Like to the morning dew:
But now, alas! she's left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

Her cheeks were like the cherry, 25
Her skin was white as snow;
When she was blithe and merry
She angel-like did show;
Her waist exceeding small,
The fives did fit her shoe: 30
But now alas! she's left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

In summer time or winter
She had her heart's desire;
I still did scorn to stint her 35
From sugar, sack, or fire;
The world went round about,
No cares we ever knew:
But now, alas! she's left me, 40
Falero, lero, loo!

To maidens' vows and swearing
Henceforth no credit give;
You may give them the hearing, 45
But never them believe;
They are as false as fair,
Unconstant, frail, untrue:

For mine, alas! hath left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

WILLIAM BROWNE

(1591-1643)

Aside from a few pure lyrics, Browne is remembered for his long poem, *Britannia's Pastorals*, 1613, which describes the natural beauties of England. His spirit and temper foreshadow James Thomson of *The Seasons* and *The Castle of Indolence*.

FOR HER GAIT, IF SHE BE WALKING

For her gait, if she be walking;
Be she sitting, I desire her
For her state's sake; and admire her
For her wit if she be talking;
Gait and state and wit approve her; 5
For which all and each I love her.

Be she sullen, I commend her
For a modest. Be she merry,
For a kind one her prefer I.
Briefly, everything doth lend her 10
So much grace, and so approve her,
That for everything I love her.

ON THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF PEMBROKE¹

Underneath this sable hearse²
Lies the subject of all verse:
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
Death, ere thou hast slain another
Fair and learned and good as she, 5
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

Marble piles let no man raise
To her name; for after days
Some kind woman, born as she,
Reading this, like Niobe³ 10
Shall turn marble, and become
Both her mourner and her tomb.

THOMAS CAREW

(1598?-1639?)

Among the Cavalier poets, who, like Herrick, sang melodiously of the less serious side of life,

¹ Sir Philip Sidney's sister, to whom he dedicated his *Arcadia*.

² tomb.

³ When Niobe was mourning the death of her children, Zeus changed her to stone.

Carew holds a deservedly high place. His lyrics are musical and delicately beautiful. Most of them were published in a collected edition after his death.

SONG

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose;
For in your beauty's orient¹ deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray 5
The golden atoms of the day;
For, in pure love, heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste 10
The nightingale when May is past;
For in your sweet dividing² throat
She winters and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars light 15
That downwards fall in dead of night;
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixed become as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west 20
The Phœnix³ builds her spicy nest;
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

PERSUASIONS TO JOY: A SONG

If the quick spirits in your eye
Now languish and anon must die;
If every sweet and every grace
Must fly from that forsaken face:
Then, Celia, let us reap our joys 5
Ere Time such goodly fruit destroys.

Or, if that golden fleece must grow
For ever free from aged snow;
If those bright suns must know no shade
Nor your fresh beauties ever fade: 10
Then fear not, Celia, to bestow
What, still being gathered, still must grow.

Thus either Time his sickle brings
In vain, or else in vain his wings.

INGRATEFUL BEAUTY THREATENED

Know, Celia, since thou art so proud,
'Twas I that gave thee thy renown.

¹ bright.

² singing.

³ see footnote, p. 329.

Thou hadst in the forgotten crowd
 Of common beauties lived unknown,
 Had not my verse extolled thy name,
 And with it impud¹ the wings of Fame.

5

That killing power is none of thine;
 I gave it to thy voice and eyes;
 Thy sweets, thy graces, all are mine;
 Thou art my star, shinest in my skies;
 Then dart not from thy borrowed sphere
 Lightning on him that fixed thee there.

10

Tempt me with such affrights no more,
 Lest what I made I uncreate;
 Let fools thy mystic form adore,
 I know thee in thy mortal state.
 Wise poets, that wrapt Truth in tales,
 Knew her themselves through all her veils.

15

THE UNFADING BEAUTY

He that loves a rosy cheek,
 Or a coral lip admires,
 Or from star-like eyes doth seek
 Fuel to maintain his fires:
 As old Time makes these decay,
 So his flames must waste away.

5

But a smooth and steadfast mind,
 Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
 Hearts with equal love combined,
 Kindle never-dying fires.
 Where these are not, I despise
 Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.

10

EPITAPH

This little vault, this narrow room,
 Of love and beauty is the tomb;
 The dawning beam, that 'gan to clear
 Our clouded sky, lies darkened here,
 For ever set to us: by death
 Sent to enflame the world beneath.
 'Twas but a bud, yet did contain
 More sweetness than shall spring again;
 A budding star, that might have grown
 Into a sun when it had blown.
 This hopeful beauty did create
 New life in love's declining state;
 But now his empire ends, and we
 From fire and wounding darts are free.
 His brand, his bow, let no man fear:
 The flames, the arrows, all lie here.

5

10

15

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT

(1606-1668)

Davenant, who boasted that he was a son of Shakespeare, is chiefly important as a link between the theater of 1642 and the new theater of 1660, with its actresses, elaborate, movable scenery, music, heroic couplets, three unities, and gigantic themes of love and honor. While imprisoned in the Tower, he wrote his ponderous heroic poem, *Gondibert*, 1652, after the French manner. In 1656, before the theaters were legally opened, he produced *The Siege of Rhodes*, the first English opera. Thereafter he managed a theater, staging more than a score of his own plays among others; collaborating with Dryden in a new version of *The Tempest* (in which, to add to the spectacle, they had two islands); and guiding the fortunes of the new heroic drama generally. His lyrics alone have lasted, although in his life Davenant enjoyed great popularity as a writer.

SONG

The lark now leaves his wat'ry nest,
 And climbing shakes his dewy wings,
 He takes this window for the East,
 And to implore your light he sings:
 Awake, awake! the morn will never rise
 Till she can dress her beauty at your eyes.

5

The merchant bows unto the seaman's star,
 The ploughman from the sun his season takes;
 But still the lover wonders what they are
 Who look for day before his mistress wakes.
 Awake, awake! break through your veils of lawn!
 Then draw your curtains, and begin the dawn!

10

TO A MISTRESS DYING

Lover. Your beauty, ripe and calm and fresh
 As eastern summers are,
 Must now, forsaking time and flesh,
 Add light to some small star.

Philosopher. Whilst she yet lives, were stars decayed,
 Their light by hers relief might find;
 But Death will lead her to a shade
 Where Love is cold and Beauty blind.

5

10

¹ To imp, in falconry, was to mend a wing by fastening on additional feathers.

Is changed at least into a star:
And who dares doubt the poets wise?

Philosopher. But ask not bodies doomed to die

To what abode they go;
Since Knowledge is but Sorrow's spy, 15
It is not safe to know.

EDMUND WALLER

(1606-1687)

Waller has written some of the best artificial poems of the Restoration period, most of them addressed to "Sacharissa," his first wife. They are notable for their wit and delicate fancy. Though of a prominent Royalist family, a graduate of Cambridge, Waller served Cromwell. Later he took the side of King Charles and was forced into exile in France. After 1660 he usually managed to keep a seat in Parliament or a position at court, frequently at the expense of turning against a friend or making himself abjectly servile.

GO, LOVELY ROSE!

Go, lovely Rose!
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be. 5

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died. 10

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired. 15

Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee:
How small a part of time they share,
That are so wondrous sweet and fair! 20

ON A GIRDLE

That which her slender waist confined,
Shall now my joyful temples bind;
No monarch but would give his crown,
His arms might do what this has done.

It was my heaven's extremest sphere, 5
The pale which held that lovely deer;
My joy, my grief, my hope, my love,
Did all within this circle move!

A narrow compass! and yet there
Dwelt all that's good, and all that's fair; 10
Give me but what this ribband bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round!

TO PHYLLIS

Phyllis, why should we delay
Pleasures shorter than the day?
Could we (which we never can)
Stretch our lives beyond their span,
Beauty like a shadow flies, 5
And our youth before us dies;
Or would youth and beauty stay,
Love hath wings, and will away.
Love hath swifter wings than Time;
Change in love to heaven does climb; 10
Gods that never change their state,
Vary oft their love and hate.

Phyllis, to this truth we owe
All the love betwixt us two.
Let not you and I inquire 15
What has been our past desire;
On what shepherds you have smiled,
Or what nymphs I have beguiled;
Leave it to the planets too,
What we shall hereafter do; 20
For the joys we now may prove,
Take advice of present love.

OLD AGE

The seas are quiet when the winds give
o'er;
So calm are we when passions are no more.
For then we know how vain it was to
boast
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost.
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes 5
Conceal that emptiness which age describes.

The soul's dark cottage, battered and de-
cayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that Time
hath made.
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become
As they draw near to their eternal home. 10
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they
view
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING

(1609-1642)

Suckling, a knight and son of a knight, well-to-do, happy-go-lucky favorite of the king, author of four forgotten plays, lives in English literature for his carefree, witty, graceful songs.

A DOUBT OF MARTYRDOM

O for some honest lover's ghost,
Some kind unbodied post
Sent from the shades below!
I strangely long to know
Whether the noble chaplets wear, 5
Those that their mistress' scorn did bear
Or those that were used kindly.

For whatsoe'er they tell us here
To make those sufferings dear,
'Twill there, I fear, be found 10
That to the being crowned
T' have loved alone will not suffice,
Unless we also have been wise
And have our loves enjoyed.

What posture can we think him in 15
That, here unloved, again
Departs, and 's thither gone
Where each sits by his own?
Or how can that Elysium be
Where I my mistress still must see 20
Circled in other's arms?

For there the judges all are just,
And Sophonisba¹ must
Be his whom she held dear,
Not his who loved her here. 25
The sweet Philoclea,² since she died,
Lies by her Pirocles² his side,
Not by Amphialus.²

Some bays, perchance, or myrtle bough
For difference crowns the brow 30
Of those kind souls that were
The noble martyrs here;
And if that be the only odds
(As who can tell?), ye kinder gods,
Give me the woman here! 35

THE CONSTANT LOVER

Out upon it, I have loved
Three whole days together!
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

¹ Of Carthage, who married Masinissa after the latter had defeated her husband, Syphax.

² Characters in Sidney's *Arcadia*.

Time shall moult away his wings, 5
Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on't is, no praise
Is due at all to me: 10
Love with me had made no stays,¹
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,
And that very fate,
There had been at least ere this 15
A dozen dozen in her place.

WHY SO PALE AND WAN?

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale? 5

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do't? 10
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit for shame! This will not move
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her: 15
The devil take her!

RICHARD CRASHAW

(1613?-1649)

with Suckling
A Puritan by birth and a graduate of Cambridge, Crashaw became a Catholic, living in France and Italy, and dying a priest of the Church. Crashaw was both a scholar and a poet. As a poet he was usually mystical. In his fondness for involved imagery, he is like Donne; in his religious poetry, which forms the greater part of his verse, he resembles Herbert. His most important volume is *Steps to the Temple*, 1646.

WISHES TO HIS SUPPOSED
MISTRESS

Whoe'er she be —
That not impossible she
That shall command my heart and me:

¹ stops.

Where'er she lie, Locked up from mortal eye In shady leaves of destiny:		Whose native ray Can tame the wanton day Of gems that in their bright shades play.	50
Till that ripe birth Of studied Fate stand forth, And teach her fair steps to our earth:		Each ruby there, Or pearl that dare appear, Be its own blush, be its own tear.	
Till that divine Idea take a shrine Of crystal flesh, through which to shine:	10	A well-tamed heart, For whose more noble smart Love may be long choosing a dart.	55
Meet you her, my wishes, Bespeak her to my blisses, And be ye called my absent kisses.	15	Eyes, that bestow Full quivers on love's bow, Yet pay less arrows than they owe.	60
I wish her beauty, That owes not all its duty To gaudy tire, or glistening shoe-tie:		Smiles, that can warm The blood, yet teach a charm, That chastity shall take no harm.	
Something more than Taffeta or tissue can, Or rampant feather, or rich fan.	20	Blushes, that bin The burnish of no sin, Nor flames of aught too hot within.	65
More than the spoil Of shop, or silkworm's toil, Or a bought blush, or a set smile.		Joys, that confess Virtue their mistress, And have no other head to dress.	
A face, that's best By its own beauty drest, And can alone commend the rest.	25	Fears, fond ¹ and flight ² As the coy bride's, when night First does the longing lover right.	70
A face, made up Out of no other shop Than what Nature's white hand sets ope.	30	Tears, quickly fled, And vain, as those are shed For a dying maidenhead.	75
A cheek, where youth And blood, with pen of truth, Write what the reader sweetly ru'th.		Days, that need borrow No part of their good-morrow From a fore-spent night of sorrow.	
A cheek, where grows More than a morning rose, Which to no box his being owes.	35	Days, that in spite Of darkness, by the light Of a clear mind, are day all night.	80
Lips, where all day A lover's kiss may play, Yet carry nothing thence away:		Nights, sweet as they, Made short by lovers' play, Yet long by th' absence of the day.	
Looks, that oppress Their richest tires, but dress And clothe their simplest nakedness.	40	Life, that dares send A challenge to his end, And when it comes, say, "Welcome, friend!"	85
Eyes, that displace The neighbour diamond, and outface That sunshine by their own sweet grace.	45	Sydneian ³ showers Of sweet discourse, whose powers Can crown old Winter's head with flowers.	90
Tresses, that wear Jewels but to declare How much themselves more precious are:			

¹ foolish.² quickly disappearing.³ Sir Philip Sidney's.

Soft silken hours,
Open suns, shady bowers;
'Bove all, nothing within that lowers.

Whate'er delight
Can make Day's forehead bright, 95
Or give down to the wings of Night.

In her whole frame
Have nature all the name,
Art and ornament the shame.

Her flattery, 100
Picture and poesy;
Her counsel her own virtue be.

I wish her store
Of worth may leave her poor
Of wishes; and I wish — no more. 105

Now, if Time knows
That her, whose radiant brows
Weave them a garland of my vows;

Her, whose just bays
My future hopes can raise, 110
A trophy to her present praise;

Her, that dares be
What these lines wish to see;
I seek no further, it is she.

'Tis she, and here, 115
Lo! I unclothe and clear
My wishes' cloudy character.

May she enjoy it
Whose merit dare apply it,
But modesty dares still deny it! 120

Such worth as this is
Shall fix my flying wishes,
And determine them to kisses.

Let her full glory,
My fancies, fly before ye; 125
Be ye my fictions — but her story.

RICHARD LOVELACE

(1618–1658)

Lovelace, an ardent Royalist, an Oxford graduate, spent his fortune, and much time in prison, for King Charles. He is the type of cavalier pictured by Browning in *Cavalier Lyrics* and by Sir Walter Scott in *Here's a Health to King*

Charles. His best lyrics deal with loyalty in love and war.

TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase, 5
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As thou too shalt adore: 10
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more.

TO ALTHEA, FROM PRISON

When Love with unconfined wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair 5
And fettered to her eye,
The gods that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
With no allaying Thames,¹ 10
Our careless heads with roses bound,
Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free,
Fishes that tipple in the deep 15
Know no such liberty.

When, like committed² linnets, I
With shriller throat will sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
And glories of my king; 20
When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlarged winds, that curl the flood,
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make, 25
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage:
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free, 30
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

¹ i.e., water.

² caged.

ANDREW MARVELL

(1621-1678)

From the time of his graduation from Cambridge to his death Marvell gave his time mainly to politics; holding a seat in Parliament; assisting Milton when the latter was Latin Secretary; and writing articles, often bitter but always keen, in favor of representative government. It is a tribute to Marvell's integrity and sociability that in spite of his political opposition he remained a friend of Charles II, who offered him sinecures, which Marvell regularly refused. Marvell's prose far outweighs in bulk his verse, but good as it is, it does not approach in greatness the few poems that he wrote. The best of Marvell's lyrics are unsurpassed.

HORATIAN ODE UPON CROMWELL'S RETURN FROM IRELAND

The forward youth that would appear,
Must now forsake his Muses dear,
Nor in the shadows sing
His numbers languishing.

'Tis time to leave the books in dust, 5
And oil the unused armor's rust,
Removing from the wall
The corslet of the hall.

So restless Cromwell could not cease 10
In the inglorious arts of peace,
But through adventurous war
Urged his active star;

And like the three-forked lightning, first
Breaking the clouds where it was nursed,
Did through his own side 15
His fiery way divide;

For 'tis all one to courage high,
The emulous, or enemy;
And with such, to enclose 20
Is more than to oppose;

Then burning through the air he went
And palaces and temples rent;
And Cæsar's head at last
Did through his laurels blast.

'Tis madness to resist or blame 25
The face of angry heaven's flame;
And if we would speak true,
Much to the man is due

Who, from his private gardens, where
He lived reserved and austere, 30

(As if his highest plot
To plant the bergamot,¹)

Could by industrious valor climb
To ruin the great work of time,
And cast the kingdoms old 35
Into another mould;

Though Justice against Fate complain,
And plead the ancient rights in vain —
But those do hold or break 40
As men are strong or weak;

Nature, that hateth emptiness,²
Allows of penetration³ less,
And therefore must make room
Where greater spirits come.

What field of all the civil war 45
Where his were not the deepest scar?
And Hampton⁴ shows what part
He had of wiser art,

Where, twining subtle fears with hope,
He wove a net of such a scope 50
That Charles himself might chase
To Carisbrook's narrow case,

That thence the Royal actor borne
The tragic scaffold might adorn:
While round the armed bands 55
Did clap their bloody hands.

He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene,
But with his keener eye 60
The axe's edge did try;

Nor called the Gods, with vulgar spite,
To vindicate his helpless right;
But bowed his comely head
Down, as upon a bed.

— This was that memorable hour 65
Which first assured the forced power:⁵
So when they did design
The Capitol's first line,⁶

A bleeding head,⁷ where they begun,
Did fright the architects to run;
And yet in that the State 70
Foresaw its happy fate!

1 A kind of pear-tree.

2 a vacuum.

3 penetrability of matter.

4 Hampton Court, the royal residence near Richmond, outside London, from which Charles fled to Carisbrooke Castle.

5 The Commonwealth.

6 Foundations of Rome.

7 Found, according to tradition, during the digging.

And now the Irish are ashamed
To see themselves in one year tamed;
So much one man can do 75
That does both act and know.

They can affirm his praises best,
And have, though overcome, confessed
How good he is, how just 80
And fit for highest trust.

Nor yet grown stiffer with command,
But still in the republic's hand —
How fit he is to sway
That can so well obey!

He to the Commons' feet presents 85
A kingdom ¹ for his first year's rents,
And (what he may) forbears
His fame, to make it theirs:

And has his sword and spoils ungirt
To lay them at the public's skirt. 90
So when the falcon high
Falls heavy from the sky,

She, having killed, no more doth search
But on the next green bough to perch,
Where, when he first does lure, 95
The falconer has her ²sure.

— What may not then our isle presume
While victory his crest does plume?
What may not others fear
If thus he crowns each year? 100

As Cæsar he, ere long, to Gaul,
To Italy an Hannibal,
And to all states not free
Shall climacteric ² be.

The Pict ³ no shelter now shall find 105
Within his parti-colored ⁴ mind,
But from this valor sad
Shrink underneath the plaid —

Happy, if in the tufted brake
The English hunter him mistake,⁵ 110
Nor lay ⁶ his hounds in near
The Caledonian deer.

But thou, the war's and Fortune's son,
March indefatigably on;
And for the last effect 115
Still keep the sword erect.

Besides the force it has to fright
The spirits of the shady night,
The same arts that did gain
A power, must it maintain. 120

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

Had we but world ¹ enough, and time,
This coyness, Lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side 5
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews. 10
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast, 15
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, Lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate. 20

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found, 25
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honor turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust: 30
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires 35
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped ² 40
power.

Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun 45
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

¹ Ireland. ² dangerous, decisive. ³ Scot.

⁴ Variegated, as his plaid.

⁵ miss. ⁶ lay in = send in.

¹ i.e., space.

² slowly crushing.

THE GARDEN

How vainly men themselves amaze,¹
 To win the palm, the oak, or bays,
 And their incessant labors see
 Crowned from some single herb or tree,
 Whose short and narrow-verged² shade 5
 Does prudently their toils upbraid,
 While all the flowers and trees do close
 To weave the garlands of repose!

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
 And Innocence, thy sister dear? 10
 Mistaken long, I sought you then
 In busy companies of men.
 Your sacred plants, if here below,
 Only among the plants will grow;
 Society is all but rude 15
 To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
 So amorous³ as this lovely green.
 Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
 Cut in these trees their mistress' name. 20
 Little, alas! they know or heed
 How far these beauties hers exceed!
 Fair trees! wheres'e'r your barks I wound,
 No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat, 25
 Love hither makes his best retreat.
 The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
 Still in a tree did end their race;
 Apollo hunted Daphne so,
 Only that she might laurel grow; 30
 And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
 Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life is this I lead!
 Ripe apples drop about my head;
 The luscious clusters of the vine 35
 Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
 The nectarine and curious⁴ peach
 Into my hands themselves do reach;
 Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
 Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass. 40

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
 Withdraws into its happiness;
 The mind, that ocean where each kind
 Does straight its own resemblance find;
 Yet it creates, transcending these, 45
 Far other worlds, and other seas,
 Annihilating all that's made
 To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
 Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root, 50
 Casting the body's vest¹ aside,
 My soul into the boughs does glide;
 There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
 Then whets and combs its silver wings,
 And, till prepared for longer flight, 55
 Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state,
 While man there walked without a mate;
 After a place so pure and sweet,
 What other help could yet be meet! 60
 But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
 To wander solitary there:
 Two paradises 'twere in one,
 To live in paradise alone.

How well the skilful gardener drew 65
 Of flowers and herbs this dial² new!
 Where, from above, the milder sun
 Does through a fragrant zodiac run,
 And, as it works, the industrious bee 70
 Computes its time as well as we!
 How could such sweet and wholesome
 hours

Be reckoned, but with herbs and flowers!

AN EPITAPH

Enough; and leave the rest to Fame!
 'Tis to commend her, but to name.
 Courtship which, living, she declined,
 When dead, to offer were unkind: 5
 Nor can the truest wit, or friend,
 Without detracting, her commend.

To say — she lived a virgin chaste
 In this age loose and all unlaced;
 Nor was, when vice is so allowed,
 Of virtue or ashamed or proud; 10
 That her soul was on Heaven so bent,
 No minute but it came and went;
 That, ready her last debt to pay,
 She summed her life up every day;
 Modest as morn, as mid-day bright, 15
 Gentle as evening, cool as night:
 — 'Tis true; but all too weakly said.
 'Twas more significant, she's dead.

HENRY VAUGHAN
(1622-1695)

Vaughan is a follower of Herbert as a writer
 of religious lyrics, but with an imagination and

1 perplex, worry.
 3 beautiful.

2 of a narrow margin
 4 delicious.

1 vestment, covering.
 2 i.e., a clock made of flowers.

lyrical power that is all his own. Little is known of his life. He attended Oxford, and later settled down at Newton-by-Usk. He called himself "the Silurist," after the old name of the place in Wales where he was born. His best work is contained in *Silex Scintillans* (Sparkling Flint), 1650, and *Olor Tscanus* (The Swan of Usk), 1651. The best known of his poems is *The Retreat*, partly because of the marked similarity between it and Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*.

THE RETREAT

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race;¹
Or taught my soul to fancy aught 5
But a white, celestial thought;
When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back, at that short space,
Could see a glimpse of his bright face; 10
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound 15
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense,
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness. 20
O, how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain,
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence th' enlightened spirit sees 25
That shady city² of palm trees.
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move; 30
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

THE WORLD

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;
And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days,
years, 5
Driv'n by the spheres,

1 existence.

2 Paradise.

Like a vast shadow moved, in which the
world
And all her train were hurled.
The doting lover in his quaintest strain
Did there complain;
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his 10
flights,
Wit's four delights,
With gloves, and knots, the silly snares of
pleasure,
Yet his dear treasure,
All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour
Upon a flower. 15

The darksome statesman, hung with weights
and woe,
Like a thick midnight-fog, moved there so
slow,
He did not stay, nor go;
Condemning thoughts, like sad eclipses,
scowl 20
Upon his soul,
And clouds of crying witnesses without
Pursued him with one shout.
Yet digged the mole, and, lest his ways be
found,
Worked under ground,
Where he did clutch his prey; but one did
see 25
That policy;
Churches and altars fed him; perjuries
Were gnats and flies;
It rained about him blood and tears, but he
Drank them as free. 30

The fearful miser on a heap of rust
Sat pining all his life there, did scarce trust
His own hands with the dust,
Yet would not place one piece above, but
lives 35
In fear of thieves.
Thousands there were as frantic as himself,
And hugged each one his pelf;
The downright epicure placed heaven in
sense,
And scorned pretence;
While others, slipt into a wide excess, 40
Said little less;
The weaker sort, slight, trivial wares en-
slave,
Who think them brave;
And poor, despised Truth sat counting by
Their victory. 45
Yet some, who all this while did weep and
sing,
And sing and weep, soared up into the
ring;

But most would use no wing.
 O fools, said I, thus to prefer dark night
 Before true light! 50
 To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
 Because it shows the way,
 The way, which from this dead and dark
 abode
 Leads up to God;
 A way there you might tread the sun, and
 be 55
 More bright than he!
 But, as I did their madness so discuss,
 One whispered thus:
 "This ring the Bridegroom did for none provide,
 But for his bride." 60

DEPARTED FRIENDS

They are all gone into the world of light!
 And I alone sit lingering here;
 Their very memory is fair and bright,
 And my sad thoughts doth clear.
 It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast, 5
 Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
 Or those faint beams in which this hill is
 drest,
 After the sun's remove.
 I see them walking in an air of glory,
 Whose light doth trample on my days; 10
 My days, which are at best but dull and
 hoary,
 Mere glimmering and decays.
 O holy hope! and high humility,
 High as the heavens above!

These are your walks, and you have showed
 them me, 15
 To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous death! the jewel of the just,
 Shining nowhere, but in the dark,
 What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
 Could man outlook that mark! 20

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest
 may know
 At first sight if the bird be flown;
 But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
 That is to him unknown.

And yet, as angels in some brighter dreams 25
 Call to the soul, when man doth sleep,
 So some strange thoughts transcend our
 wonted themes,
 And into glory peep.

If a star were confined into a tomb,
 The captive flames must needs burn
 there; 30
 But when the hand that locked her up gives
 room,
 She'll shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
 Created glories under Thee,
 Resume Thy spirit from this world of
 thrall 35
 Into true liberty!

Either disperse these mists, which blot and
 fill
 My perspective still as they pass;
 Or else remove me hence unto that hill,
 Where I shall need no glass. 40

JOHN DONNE (1573-1631)

John Donne became famous both as a vigorous, influential poet and as a stirring preacher. He was born a Roman Catholic. He studied at Oxford and Cambridge, and later read law at Lincoln's Inn. After a careful, analytical study of religious questions, he joined the Church of England. In 1610 he took orders, and in 1621 he was appointed Dean of St. Paul's in London. Here his sermons, which are still good reading, brought him a great reputation. The best of his poems appeared in *The Progress of the Soul*, 1601, *An Anatomy of the World*, 1611, *Epithalamium*, 1613, and *Divine Poems*. These were reprinted in numerous collected editions after his death.

Donne is a difficult, but interesting and original poet, who delighted in the use of "conceits" or intricate figures of speech. This practice, strong among the Elizabethan poets, he carried on to highly artificial, often ludicrous, conclusions. In his intellectuality, directness, and, at times, grotesqueness, Donne is much like Browning. Because of his definite accomplishment and wide influence he towers above British minor poets.

The definitive edition of Donne's poems is H. J. C. Grierson's, in two volumes (Oxford University Press).

made "a wit" of himself
 passionate, and witty.

Child of the Renaissance

SONG

Go and catch a falling star,
 Get with child a mandrake ¹ root,
 Tell me where all times past are,
 Or who cleft the Devil's foot;
 Teach me to hear mermaids singing, 5
 Or to keep off envy's stinging,
 And find
 What wind
 Serves to advance an honest mind.

 If thou be'st born to strange sights, 10
 Things invisible go see,
 Ride ten thousand days and nights
 Till age snow white hairs on thee;
 Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me
 All strange wonders that befell thee, 15
 And swear
 No where
 Lives a woman true and fair.

 If thou find'st one let me know,
 Such a pilgrimage were sweet; 20
 Yet do not, I would not go,
 Though at next door we might meet;
 Though she were true when you met her,
 And last till you write your letter,
 Yet she 25
 Will be
 False, ere I come, to two or three.

A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING
MOURNING

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
 And whisper to their souls to go,
 Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
 "Now his breath goes," and some say "No";

So let us meet and make no noise, 5
 No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,
 'Twere profanation of our joys,
 To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' Earth brings harm and fears,
 Men reckon what it did and meant; 10
 But trepidation of the spheres,
 Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love,
 (Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
 Of absence, 'cause it doth remove 15
 The thing which elemented ² it.

But we by a love so far refined,
 That ourselves know not what it is,
 Inter-assured of the mind,
 Careless eyes, lips, and hands, to miss; 20

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
 Though I must go, endure not yet
 A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so 25
 As stiff twin compasses are two,
 Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
 To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
 Yet when the other far doth roam, 30
 It leans and hearkens after it,
 And grows erect as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must
 Like th' other foot, obliquely run,
 Thy firmness makes my circle just, 35
 And makes me end where I begun.

THE INDIFFERENT

I can love both fair and brown;
 Her whom abundance melts, and her whom
 want betrays;
 Her who loves lonesome best, and her who
 masks and plays;
 Her whom the country formed, and whom
 the town;
 Her who believes, and her who tries; 5
 Her who still weeps with spongy eyes,
 And her who is dry cork and never cries.
 I can love her, and her, and you, and you;
 I can love any, so she be not true.

Will no other vice content you? 10
 Will it not serve your turn to do as did your
 mothers?
 Or have you all old vices spent and now
 would find out others?
 Or doth a fear that men are true torment you?
 O we are not, be not you so;
 Let me — and do you — twenty know; 15
 Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
 Must I, who came to travel thorough you,
 Grow your fixed subject, because you are
 true?

Venus heard me sigh this song;
 And by love's sweetest part, variety, she
 swore, 20
 She heard not this till now; it should be so no
 more.

¹ The mandragora, a root to which many superstitions were attached.

² formed, caused.

She went, examined, and returned ere long,
 And said, "Alas! some two or three
 Poor heretics in love there be,
 Which think to stablish dangerous con-
 stancy."²⁵
 But I have told them, 'Since you will be
 true,
 You shall be true to them, who 're false to
 you.'"

SONG

Sweetest love, I do not go
 For weariness of thee,
 Nor in hope the world can show
 A fitter love for me;
 But since that I
 At the last must part, 'tis best
 Thus to use myself in jest,
 By feigned deaths to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
 And yet is here to-day;
 He hath no desire nor sense,
 Nor half so short a way;
 Then fear not me,
 But believe that I shall make
 Speedier journeys, since I take
 More wings and spurs than he.

O how feeble is man's power,
 That, if good fortune fall,
 Cannot add another hour,
 Nor a last hour recall;
 But come bad chance,
 And we join to it our strength,
 And we teach it art and length,
 Itself o'er us to advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not
 wind,
 But sigh'st my soul away;
 When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
 My life's blood doth decay:
 It cannot be
 That thou lovest me as thou say'st,
 If in thine my life thou waste,
 That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart
 Forethink me any ill;
 Destiny may take thy part
 And may thy fears fulfil.
 But think that we
 Are but turned aside to sleep:
 They who one another keep
 Alive, ne'er parted be.

DEATH

Death, be not proud, though some have
 called thee
 Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
 For those whom thou think'st thou dost
 overthrow
 Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill
 me.
 From Rest and Sleep, which but thy pictures
 be,⁵
 Much pleasure, then from thee much more
 must flow;
 And soonest our best men with thee do go,
 Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!
 Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and
 desperate men,
 And dost with poison, war, and sickness
 dwell;¹⁰
 And poppy or charms can make us sleep as
 well
 And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st
 thou then?
 One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
 And Death shall be no more: Death, thou
 shalt die!

THE FUNERAL

Whoever comes to shroud me, do not harm
 Nor question much
 That subtle wreath of hair about mine arm;
 The mystery, the sign you must not touch,
 For 'tis my outward soul,⁵
 Viceroy to that which, unto heav'n being
 gone,
 Will leave this to control
 And keep these limbs, her provinces, from
 dissolution.
 For if the sinewy thread my brain lets fall
 Through every part¹⁰
 Can tie those parts, and make me one of all;
 Those hairs, which upward grew, and
 strength and art
 Have from a better brain,
 Can better do't: except she meant that I
 By this should know my pain,¹⁵
 As prisoners then are manacled, when they're
 condemned to die.
 Whate'er she meant by't, bury it with me,
 For since I am
 Love's martyr, it might breed idolatry,
 If into others' hands these reliques came.²⁰
 As 'twas humility
 T' afford to it all that a soul can do,⁴⁰

So 'tis some bravery
That, since you would have none of me, I
bury some of you.

THE CANONIZATION

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me
love;
Or chide my palsy, or my gout;
My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout;
With wealth your state, your mind with arts
improve;
Take you a course, get you a place, 5
Observe his Honor, or his Grace;
Or the king's real, or his stamped face
Contemplate; what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.

Alas! alas! who's injured by my love? 10
What merchant's ships have my sighs
drowned?
Who says my tears have overflowed his
ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?
When did the heats which my veins fill
Add one more to the plaguy bill? 15
Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,
Though she and I do love.

Call 's what you will, we are made such by
love;
Call her one, me another fly; 20
We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,
And we in us find th' eagle and the dove.
The phoenix¹ riddle hath more wit
By us; we two being one, are it;
So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit. 25
We die and rise the same, and prove
Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,
And if unfit for tomb or hearse,
Our legend be, it will be fit for verse; 30
And if no piece of chronicle we prove,
We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;
As well a well-wrought urn becomes
The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
And by these hymns all shall approve 35
Us canonized for love;

And thus invoke us: "You, whom reverend
love
Made one another's hermitage;

¹ The Phoenix, symbol of immortality, was supposed, after living centuries, to burn itself in a nest of spices, and then to rise from the ashes.

You, to whom love was peace, that now is
rage;
Who did the whole world's soul contract, and
drove 40
Into the glasses of your eyes;
So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize,
Countries, towns, courts, beg from above
A pattern of your love." 45

LOVE'S DEITY

I long to talk with some old lover's ghost
Who died before the god of love was born.
I cannot think that he who then loved most
Sunk so low as to love one which did scorn.
But since this god produced a destiny, 5
And that vice-nature, custom, lets it be,
I must love her that loves not me.

Sure they which made him god, meant not so
much,
Nor he in his young godhead practised it.
But when an even flame two hearts did
touch, 10
His office was indulgently to fit
Actives to passives. Correspondency
Only his subject was; it cannot be
Love, till I love her who loves me.

But every modern god will now extend 15
His vast prerogative as far as Jove.
To rage, to lust, to write to, to commend,
All is the purlieu of the god of love.
O, were we wakened by this tyranny
To ungod this child again, it could not be 20
I should love her who loves not me.

Rebel and atheist too, why murmur I,
As though I felt the worst that love could
do?
Love may make me leave loving, or might try
A deeper plague, to make her love me 25
too;
Which, since she loves before, I'm loth to see.
Falsehood is worse than hate; and that must
be,
If she whom I love, should love me.

A HYMN TO GOD THE FATHER

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done
before?
Wilt thou forgive that sin through which I
run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?

When thou hast done, thou hast not done; 5
For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sins their door?

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallowed in a score? 10

When thou hast done, thou hast not done;
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the
shore;

But swear by thyself that at my death thy
son 15

Shall shine as he shines now and heretofore;

And having done that, thou hast done;
I fear no more.

ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674)

The life of Herrick, foremost of the so-called "sons of Ben," is a series of apparently antithetical sequences. Born in Cheapside, London, in August, 1591, the son of a goldsmith, he was apprenticed at sixteen to his uncle, Sir William Herrick, who was likewise a goldsmith. At twenty-one he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, taking his B.A. in 1616. A dozen years later, after a convivial, or at least carefree, life in London with Ben Jonson and other poets, he took orders and received from King Charles the parish of Dean Prior in Devonshire. With the coming of the Commonwealth in 1647 he lost this living and returned to London. In this year he published his first book of verse, *Noble Numbers, or Pious Pieces*. In 1648 there followed immediately *Hesperides, or Works both Human and Divine*, and a one-volume edition of both books. With the Restoration in 1660, Herrick was given Dean Prior again, where he spent the rest of his life. He died in 1674, and was buried in his church.

Herrick is a direct descendant in literature of Anacreon, Horace, and Catullus, and of their follower in verse, Ben Jonson. He treats light subjects with consummate lyrical skill and an originality that is inimitable.

An excellent edition of the *Hesperides*, edited by H. P. Horne, with a biography of Herrick by Ernest Rhys, may be found in The Canterbury Poets series, Walter Scott Publishing Company. The complete poems may be found in the Muses Library, two volumes, edited by A. Pollard, with a preface by Swinburne.

THE ARGUMENT OF HIS BOOK

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and
bowers,

Of April, May, of June, and July flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts,¹ wassails,²
wakes,³

Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal
cakes.

I write of Youth, of Love, and have access 5
By these, to sing of cleanly wantonness;

I sing of dews, of rains, and, piece by piece,
Of balm, of oil, of spice, and ambergris;

I sing of times trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red, and lilies white; 10

I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The court of Mab, and of the Fairy King.

I write of Hell; I sing and ever shall,
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

WHEN HE WOULD HAVE HIS VERSES READ

In sober mornings do not thou rehearse
The holy incantation of a verse;

¹ The last cart loaded at harvest time.
² drinking-bouts. ³ parish holidays.

But when that men have both well drunk and
fed,

Let my enchantments then be sung or read.
When laurel spirits i' th' fire, and when the
hearth 5

Smiles to itself and gilds the roof with mirth;
When up the thyrse¹ is raised, and when the
sound

Of sacred orgies flies, "a round, a round;"²
When the rose reigns, and locks with oint-
ments shine,

Let rigid Cato read these lines of mine. 10

UPON THE LOSS OF HIS MISTRESSES

I have lost, and lately, these

Many dainty mistresses:

Stately Julia, prime of all;

Sapho next, a principal;

Smooth Anthea, for a skin 5

White and heaven-like crystalline;

Sweet Electra, and the choice

Myrha, for the lute and voice.

Next, Corinna, for her wit,

And the graceful use of it; 10

¹ A staff twined with ivy, — a symbol of Bacchus.
² i.e., "let's dance."

With Perilla: all are gone,
Only Herrick's left alone,
For to number sorrow by
Their departures hence, and die.

CHERRY-RIPE

Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones, come and buy;
If so be you ask me where
They do grow? I answer, There,
Where my Julia's lips do smile,
There's the land, or cherry isle,
Whose plantations fully show
All the year, where cherries grow.

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

Get up, get up for shame, the blooming
morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colors through the air:
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree.
Each flower has wept and bowed toward the
east
Above an hour since; yet you not dressed;
Nay! not so much as out of bed?
When all the birds have matins said
And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis
sin,
Nay, profanation, to keep in,
Whereas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in
May.

Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh
and green,
And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair:
Fear not; the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you:
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come,¹ some orient pearls un-
wept;
Come and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night:
And Titan² on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in
praying:
Few beads³ are best, when once we go
a-Maying.

¹ for your arrival.

² The sun.

³ prayers.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming,
mark
How each field turns a street,¹ each street a
park
Made green and trimmed with trees; see
how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch: each porch, each door, ere
this,
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorn, neatly inter-
wove;
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields and we not see 't?
Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey
The proclamation made for May:
And sin no more, as we have done, by
staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day
But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come
Back, and with white-thorn laden
home.
Some have despatched their cakes and
cream
Before that we have left² to dream;
And some have wept, and wooed, and
plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off
sloth:
Many a green-gown³ has been given;
Many a kiss, both odd and even:
Many a glance, too, has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the keys betraying
This night, and locks picked, yet we're
not a-Maying.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime;
And take the harmless folly of the time!
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun;
And, as a vapor or a drop of rain,
Once lost, can ne'er be found again.
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but
decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

¹ i.e., is crowded.

² ceased.

³ i.e., many a maid has been thrown upon the grass.

TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun, 5
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer; 10
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times, still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For, having lost but once your prime, 15
You may forever tarry.

TO ANTHERA, WHO MAY COMMAND HIM ANYTHING

Bid me to live, and I will live
Thy Protestant¹ to be:
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind, 5
A heart as sound and free,
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay,
To honor thy decree: 10
Or bid it languish quite away,
And 't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep,
While I have eyes to see:
And having none, yet will I keep 15
A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair,
Under that cypress tree:
Or bid me die, and I will dare 20
E'en death, to die for thee.

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me;
And hast command of every part,
To live and die for thee.

¹ confirmed admirer.

HIS REQUEST TO JULIA

Julia, if I chance to die
Ere I print my poetry,
I most humbly thee desire
To commit it to the fire:
Better 'twere my book were dead, 5
Than to live not perfected.

A LYRIC TO MIRTH

While the milder fates consent,
Let's enjoy our merriment;
Drink, and dance, and pipe, and play,
Kiss our dollies² night and day;
Crowned with clusters of the vine, 5
Let us sit and quaff our wine;
Call on Bacchus, chant his praise,
Shake the thyrses and bite the bays;
Rouse Anacreon from the dead,
And return him drunk to bed; 10
Sing o'er Horace; for ere long
Death will come and mar the song:
Then shall Wilson and Gotiere²
Never sing or play more here.

UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes.
Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see
That brave vibration, each way free, 5
O, how that glittering taketh me!

A BACCHANALIAN VERSE

Fill me a mighty bowl
Up to the brim;
That I may drink
Unto my Jonson's soul.

Crown it again, again; 5
And thrice repeat
That happy heat,
To drink to thee, my Ben.

Well I can quaff, I see,
To th' number five, 10
Or nine, but thrive
In frenzy ne'er like thee.

¹ sweethearts.

² Composers living in Herrick's day.

TO SILVIA

Pardon my trespass, Silvia; I confess
 My kiss outwent the bounds of shamefaced-
 ness;
 None is discreet at all times; no, not Jove
 Himself, at one time, can be wise and love.

TO LIVE MERRILY, AND TO
TRUST TO GOOD VERSES

Now is the time for mirth,
 Nor cheek or tongue be dumb;
 For with the flow'ry earth,
 The golden pomp is come.

The golden pomp is come; 5
 For now each tree does wear,
 Made of her pap and gum,
 Rich beads of amber here.

Now reigns the Rose, and now
 Th' Arabian dew besmears 10
 My uncontrolled brow,
 And my retorted¹ hairs.

Homer,² this health to thee,
 In sack of such a kind,
 That it would make thee see, 15
 Though thou wert ne'er so blind.

Next, Virgil I'll call forth,
 To pledge this second health
 In wine whose each cup's worth 20
 An Indian commonwealth.

A goblet next I'll drink
 To Ovid; and suppose
 Made he the pledge, he'd think
 The world had all *one nose*.³

Then this immensive cup 25
 Of aromatic wine,
 Catullus, I quaff up
 To that terse muse of thine.

Wild I am now with heat;
 O Bacchus, cool thy rays! 30
 Or frantic I shall eat
 Thy thyrses, and bite the bays.

Round, round, the roof does run;
 And being ravished thus,

Come, I will drink a tun
 To my Propertius. 35

Now to Tibullus next,
 This flood I drink to thee:
 But stay, I see a text,
 That this presents to me. 40

Behold! Tibullus lies
 Here burnt, whose small return
 Of ashes scarce suffice
 To fill a little urn.

Trust to good verses then; 45
 They only will aspire,
 When pyramids, as men,
 Are lost i' th' funeral fire;

And when all bodies meet
 In Lethe, to be drowned; 50
 Then only numbers sweet
 With endless life are crowned.

UPON MISTRESS SUSANNA
SOUTHWELL HER FEET

Her pretty feet
 Like snails did creep
 A little out, and then,
 As if they played at bo-peep, 5
 Did soon draw in again.

TO ELECTRA

I dare not ask a kiss;
 I dare not beg a smile;
 Lest having that or this,
 I might grow proud the while.

No, no, the utmost share 5
 Of my desire shall be
 Only to kiss that air
 That lately kissed thee.

TO MUSIC, TO BECALM HIS
FEVER

Charm me asleep, and melt me so
 With thy delicious numbers,
 That being ravished, hence I go
 Away in easy slumbers.
 Ease my sick head, 5
 And make my bed,

¹ disheveled.

² This poem gives a good idea of Herrick's favorite classical poets. To the list should be added Anacreon and Horace.

³ A reference to Ovid's name, Naso.

Thou power that canst sever
 From me this ill,
 And quickly still,
 Though thou not kill
 My fever.

10

Thou sweetly canst convert the same
 From a consuming fire
 Into a gentle-licking flame,
 And make it thus expire;
 Then make me weep
 My pains asleep,
 And give me such repose,
 That I, poor I,
 May think, thereby,
 I live and die
 'Mongst roses.

15

20

Fall on me like a silent dew,
 Or like those maiden showers
 Which, by the peep of day, do strew
 A bapti'm o'er the flowers.
 Melt, melt my pains,
 With thy soft strains,
 That having ease me given,
 With full delight
 I leave this light,
 And take my flight
 For Heaven.

25

30

DELIGHT IN DISORDER

A sweet disorder in the dress
 Kindles in clothes a wantonness:
 A lawn about the shoulders thrown
 Into a fine distraction;
 An erring lace, which here and there
 Enthral the crimson stomacher;
 A cuff neglectful, and thereby
 Ribbons to flow confusedly;
 A winning wave, deserving note,
 In the tempestuous petticoat;
 A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
 I see a wild civility;¹
 Do more bewitch me, than when art
 Is too precise in every part.

5

10

THE BRACELET TO JULIA

Why I tie about thy wrist,
 Julia, this my silken twist;
 For what other reason is't,
 But to show thee how in part
 Thou my pretty captive art?
 But thy bond-slave is my heart.

5

'Tis but silk that bindeth thee,
 Knap the thread and thou art free:
 But 'tis otherwise with me;
 I am bound, and fast bound so,
 That from thee I cannot go;
 If I could, I would not so.

10

THE PRIMROSE

Ask me why I send you here
 This sweet Infanta of the year?
 Ask me why I send to you
 This Primrose, thus bepearled with dew?
 I will whisper to your ears,
 The sweets of love are mixed with tears.

5

Ask me why this flower does show
 So yellow-green, and sickly too?
 Ask me why the stalk is weak,
 And bending, yet it doth not break?
 I will answer, these discover
 What fainting hopes are in a lover.

10

HIS TEARS TO THAMESIS

I send, I send here my supremest kiss
 To thee, my silver-footed Thamesis.¹
 No more shall I reiterate² thy strand,
 Whereon so many stately structures stand,
 Nor in the summer's sweeter evenings go
 To bathe in thee, as thousand others do:
 No more shall I along thy crystal glide
 In barge, with boughs and rushes beautified,
 With soft, smooth virgins for our chaste dis-
 port,
 To Richmond, Kingston, and to Hampton
 Court:³
 Never again shall I with finny oar
 Put from or draw unto the faithful shore;
 And landing here, or safely landing there,
 Make way to my beloved Westminster,⁴
 Or to the golden Cheapside,⁵ where the
 earth
 Of Julia Herrick gave to me my birth.
 May all clean nymphs and curious water
 dames
 With swan-like state, float up and down thy
 streams:
 No drought upon thy wanton waters fall,
 To make them lean and languishing at all:
 No ruffling winds come hither to disease⁶
 Thy pure and silver-wristed Naiades.

5

10

15

20

¹ The Thames.
² walk again. (Note the root: Lat. *iter* = road, journey.)

³ These are places on the Thames, not far from London.
⁴ The school that Herrick probably attended.

⁵ An old section of London.

⁶ make uncomfortable.

¹ good breeding.

Keep up your state, ye streams, and as ye
 spring,
 Never make sick your banks by surfeiting.
 Grow young with tides, and though I see ye
 never, 25
 Receive this vow; so fare ye well for ever.

TO DAFFODILS

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
 You haste away so soon;
 As yet the early-rising sun
 Has not attained his noon.

Stay, stay, 5
 Until the hasting day
 Has run
 But to the even-song;
 And, having prayed together, we
 Will go with you along. 10

We have short time to stay, as you,
 We have as short a spring;
 As quick a growth to meet decay,
 As you, or anything.

We die 15
 As your hours do, and dry
 Away,
 Like to the summer's rain;
 Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
 Ne'er to be found again. 20

A GRACE FOR A CHILD

Here a little child I stand,
 Heaving up my either hand;
 Cold as paddocks¹ though they be.
 Here I lift them up to Thee,
 For a benison to fall 5
 On our meat, and on us all. Amen.

THE COUNTRY LIFE

TO THE HONORED MR. ENDYMION PORTER,
 GROOM OF THE BEDCHAMBER TO HIS
 MAJESTY

Sweet country life, to such unknown
 Whose lives are others', not their own!
 But, serving courts and cities, be
 Less happy, less enjoying thee.
 Thou never plough'st the ocean's foam 5
 To seek and bring rough pepper home;
 Nor to the Eastern Ind dost rove
 To bring from thence the scorched clove;
 Nor, with the loss of thy loved rest,
 Bring'st home the ingot from the West. 10

No, thy ambition's masterpiece
 Flies no thought higher than a fleece;
 Or how to pay thy hinds, and clear
 All scores, and so to end the year:
 But walk'st about thine own dear bounds, 15
 Not envying others' larger grounds,
 For well thou know'st, 'tis not th' extent
 Of land makes life, but sweet content.
 When now the cock, the ploughman's horn,
 Calls forth the lily-wristed morn, 20
 Then to thy corn-fields thou dost go,
 Which, though well soiled,¹ yet thou dost
 know

That the best compost for the lands
 Is the wise master's feet and hands.
 There at the plough thou find'st thy team 25
 With a hind whistling there to them,
 And cheer'st them up by singing how
 The kingdom's portion is the plough.
 This done, then to th' enamelled meads
 Thou go'st; and as thy foot there treads, 30
 Thou seest a present Godlike power
 Imprinted in each herb and flower,
 And smell'st the breath of great-eyed kine,
 Sweet as the blossoms of the vine.
 Here thou behold'st thy large sleek neat² 35
 Unto the dewlaps³ up in meat;
 And as thou look'st, the wanton steer,
 The heifer, cow, and ox draw near,
 To make a pleasing pastime there.
 These seen, thou go'st to view thy flocks 40
 Of sheep, safe from the wolf and fox,
 And find'st their bellies there as full
 Of short sweet grass as backs with wool,
 And leav'st them, as they feed and fill,
 A shepherd piping on a hill. 45
 For sports, for pageantry, and plays,
 Thou hast thy eves and holidays,
 On which the young men and maids meet
 To exercise their dancing feet,
 Tripping the comely country round, 50
 With daffodils and daisies crowned.
 Thy wakes, thy quintals,⁴ here thou hast,
 Thy Maypoles too with garlands graced;
 Thy morris-dance, thy Whitsun-ale,
 Thy shearing-feast, which never fail; 55
 Thy harvest home,⁵ thy wassail bowl,
 That's tossed up after fox i' th' hole;⁶
 Thy mummeries, thy Twelfththide kings
 And queens, thy Christmas revellings;
 Thy nut-brown mirth, thy russet wit, 60
 And no man pays too dear for it.
 To these thou hast thy times to go
 And trace the hare i' th' treacherous snow:

1 fertilized.

2 oxen.

3 Folds of skin under an ox's neck.

4 tilting games.

5 Celebration at the end of harvest.

6 An old game.

1 frogs.

Thy witty wiles to draw, and get
 The lark into the trammel net: 65
 Thou hast thy cockrood¹ and thy glade
 To take the precious pheasant made;
 Thy lime-twigs, snares, and pitfalls then,
 To catch the pilf'ring birds, not men.
 O happy life! if that their good 70
 The husbandmen but understood,
 Who all the day themselves do please,
 And younglings, with such sports as these,
 And, lying down, have nought t' affright
 Sweet sleep, that makes more short the
 night. 75

*Catera desunt*² —

HIS PRAYER TO BEN JONSON

When I a verse shall make,
 Know I have prayed thee,
 For old religion's sake,
 Saint Ben, to aid me.

Make the way smooth for me, 5
 When I, thy Herrick,
 Honoring thee, on my knee
 Offer my Lyric.

Candles I'll give to thee,
 And a new altar; 10
 And thou, Saint Ben, shalt be
 Writ in my psalter.

UPON A CHILD

Here a pretty baby lies
 Sung asleep with lullabies:
 Pray be silent, and not stir
 Th' easy earth that covers her.

THE MAD MAID'S SONG

Good morrow to the day so fair;
 Good morning, sir, to you;
 Good morrow to mine own torn hair,
 Bedabbled with the dew.

Good morning to this primrose too; 5
 Good morrow to each maid
 That will with flowers the tomb bestrew
 Wherein my love is laid.

Ah! woe is me, woe is me,
 Alack, and well-a-day! 10
 For pity, sir, find out that bee
 Which bore my love away.

¹ A net stretched across a glade, or artificially made clearing, to catch woodcock and similar birds.

² "The rest is lacking." Herrick never finished the poem.

I'll seek him in your bonnet brave;
 I'll seek him in your eyes;
 Nay, now I think they've made his grave 15
 I'th' bed of strawberries.

I'll seek him there; I know, ere this,
 The cold, cold earth doth shake him;
 But I will go, or send a kiss
 By you, sir, to awake him. 20

Pray hurt him not; though he be dead,
 He knows well who do love him;
 And who with green turfs rear his head,
 And who do rudely move him.

He's soft and tender, pray take heed, 25
 With bands of cowslips bind him,
 And bring him home; but 'tis decreed,
 That I shall never find him.

THE NIGHT-PIECE, TO JULIA

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
 The shooting stars attend thee;
 And the elves also,
 Whose little eyes glow,
 Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee. 5

No Will-o'-th'-Wisp mislight thee,
 Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;
 But on, on thy way,
 Not making a stay,
 Since ghost there's none to affright thee. 10

Let not the dark thee cumber;
 What though the moon does slumber?
 The stars of the night
 Will lend thee their light,
 Like tapers clear, without number. 15

Then, Julia, let me woo thee,
 Thus, thus to come unto me;
 And when I shall meet
 Thy silv'ry feet,
 My soul I'll pour into thee. 20

THE HOCK CART; OR, HARVEST HOME

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE MILD MAY, EARL OF
 WESTMORLAND

Come, sons of summer, by whose toil,
 We are the lords of wine and oil;
 By whose tough labors and rough hands,
 We rip up first, then reap our lands.
 Crowned with the ears of corn, now come, 5
 And to the pipe sing harvest home.

Come forth, my lord, and see the cart
 Dressed up with all the country art.
 See, here a malkin,¹ there a sheet,
 As spotless pure as it is sweet; 10
 The horses, mares, and frisking fillies,
 Clad all in linen white as lilies.
 The harvest swains and wenches bound
 For joy, to see the hock cart crowned.
 About the cart, hear how the rout 15
 Of rural younglings raise the shout,
 Pressing before, some coming after,
 Those with a shout, and these with laughter.
 Some bless the cart, some kiss the sheaves,
 Some prank them up with oaken leaves; 20
 Some cross the fill-horse,² some with great
 Devotion stroke the home-borne wheat;
 While other rustics, less attent
 To prayers than to merriment,
 Run after with their breeches rent. 25
 Well, on, brave boys, to your lord's hearth,
 Glitt'ring with fire, where, for your mirth,
 Ye shall see first the large and chief
 Foundation of your feast, fat beef;
 With upper stories, mutton, veal, 30
 And bacon, which makes full the meal,
 With sev'ral dishes standing by,
 As, here a custard, there a pie,
 And here all-tempting frumenty.³
 And for to make the merry cheer, 35
 If smirking wine be wanting here,
 There's that which drowns all care, stout
 beer,
 Which freely drink to your lord's health,
 Then to the plough (the commonwealth),
 Next to your flails, your fans, your vats; 40
 Then to the maids with wheaten hats;
 To the rough sickle, and the crook'd scythe,
 Drink, frolic boys, till all be blithe.
 Feed and grow fat; and as ye eat,
 Be mindful that the lab'ring neat, 45
 As you, may have their fill of meat.
 And know, besides, ye must revoke⁴
 The patient ox unto the yoke,
 And all go back unto the plough 49
 And harrow, though they're hanged up now.
 And, you must know, your lord's word's true,
 Feed him ye must, whose food fills you.
 And that this pleasure is like rain,
 Not sent ye for to drown your pain,
 But for to make it spring again. 55

TO BLOSSOMS

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
 Why do ye fall so fast?
 Your date is not so past,

¹ a cloth on a pole.
³ boiled wheat.

² draught-horse.
⁴ recall.

But you may stay yet here a while,
 To blush and gently smile, 5
 And go at last.

What, were ye born to be
 An hour or half's delight,
 And so to bid good-night?
 'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth, 10
 Merely to show your worth,
 And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
 May read how soon things have
 Their end, though ne'er so brave; 15
 And after they have shown their pride
 Like you a while, they glide
 Into the grave.

UPON BEN JONSON

Here lies Jonson with the rest
 Of the poets, but the best.
 Reader, wouldst thou more have known?
 Ask his story, not this stone;
 That will speak what this can't tell 5
 Of his glory. So farewell.

AN ODE FOR HIM

Ah, Ben!
 Say how or when
 Shall we, thy guests,
 Meet at those lyric feasts
 Made at the Sun, 5
 The Dog, the Triple Tun?
 Where we such clusters¹ had
 As made us nobly wild, not mad;
 And yet each verse of thine
 Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine. 10

My Ben,
 Or come again,
 Or send to us
 Thy wit's great overplus;
 But teach us yet 15
 Wisely to husband it,
 Lest we that talent spend,
 And having once brought to an end
 That precious stock, the store 19
 Of such a wit the world should have no more.

DISSUASIONS FROM IDLENESS

Cynthus² pluck ye by the ear,
 That ye may good doctrine hear.
 Play not with the maiden hair,
 For each ringlet there's a snare.

¹ of grapes; i.e., wine. ² Apollo.

Cheek and eye, and lip and chin,
 These are traps to take fools in;
 Arms and hands, and all parts else,
 Are but toils, or manacles,
 Set on purpose to enthrall
 Men, but slothfuls most of all.
 Live employed, and so live free
 From these fetters, like to me,
 Who have found, and still can prove
 The lazy man the most doth love.

THE HAG

The hag is astride
 This night for to ride;
 The devil and she together:
 Through thick and through thin,
 Now out and then in,
 Though ne'er so foul be the weather.

A thorn or a burr
 She takes for a spur;
 With a lash of a bramble she rides now,
 Through brakes and through briars,
 O'er ditches and mires,
 She follows the spirit that guides now.

No beast, for his food,
 Dares now range the wood,
 But hushed in his lair he lies lurking;
 While mischiefs by these,
 On land and on seas,
 At noon or night are a-working.

The storm will arise
 And trouble the skies
 This night; and, more for the wonder,
 The ghost from the tomb
 Affrighted shall come,
 Called out by the clap of the thunder.

A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE

Lord, Thou hast given me a cell
 Wherein to dwell;
 A little house, whose humble roof
 Is weatherproof,
 Under the spars of which I lie
 Both soft and dry;
 Where Thou, my chamber for to ward,
 Hast set a guard
 Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
 Me while I sleep.
 Low is my porch, as is my fate,
 Both void of state;
 And yet the threshold of my door
 Is worn by th' poor,

5 Who thither come and freely get
 Good words or meat.
 Like as my parlor, so my hall
 And kitchen's small:
 A little buttery, and therein
 A little bin,
 10 Which keeps my little loaf of bread
 Unchipped, unflead;¹
 Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
 Make me a fire,
 Close by whose living coal I sit,
 25 And glow like it.
 Lord, I confess too, when I dine,
 The pulse is Thine,
 And all those other bits that be
 There placed by Thee;
 30 The worts,² the purslane,³ and the mess
 Of water-cress,
 Which of Thy kindness Thou hast sent;
 And my content
 Makes those, and my beloved beet,
 35 To be more sweet.
 'Tis Thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
 With guiltless mirth,
 And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
 Spiced to the brink.
 40 Lord, 'tis Thy plenty-dropping hand
 That soils my land,
 And giv'st me, for my bushel sown,
 Twice ten for one:
 Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
 45 Her egg each day;
 Besides my healthful ewes to bear
 Me twins each year;
 The while the conduits of my kine
 50 Run cream, for wine.
 All these, and better Thou dost send
 Me, to this end,
 That I should render, for my part,
 A thankful heart,
 Which, fired with incense, I resign,
 55 As wholly Thine;
 But the acceptance, that must be,
 My Christ, by Thee.

HIS WINDING-SHEET

5 Come thou, who art the wine and wit
 Of all I've writ;
 The grace, the glory, and the best
 Piece of the rest.
 Thou art of what I did intend
 10 The all and end;
 And what was made, was made to meet
 Thee, thee my sheet;

¹ unflayed. ² cabbages.
³ A vegetable used for salads.

Come then, and be to my chaste side
 Both bed and bride. 10
 We two, as relics left, will have
 One rest, one grave;
 And, hugging close, we will not fear
 Lust ent'ring here,
 Where all desires are dead or cold, 15
 As is the mould;
 And all affections are forgot,
 Or trouble not.
 Here, here the slaves and pris'ners be
 From shackles free, 20
 And weeping widows, long oppressed,
 Do here find rest.
 The wronged client ends his laws
 Here, and his cause.
 Here those long suits of Chancery lie 25
 Quiet, or die;
 And all Star Chamber bills do cease,
 Or hold their peace.
 Here needs no Court for our Request,
 Where all are best, 30
 All wise, all equal, and all just
 Alike i' th' dust.
 Nor need we here to fear the frown
 Of court or crown,
 Where Fortune bears no sway o'er things, 35
 There all are kings.
 In this securer place we'll keep,
 As lulled asleep;
 Or for a little time we'll lie,
 As robes laid by, 40
 To be another day re-worn,
 Turned, but not torn,
 Or like old testaments engrossed,
 Locked up, not lost;
 And for a while lie here concealed, 45
 To be revealed
 Next, at that great Platonic Year,¹
 And then meet here.

HIS LITANY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the hour of my distress,
 When temptations me oppress,
 And when I my sins confess,
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When I lie within my bed, 5
 Sick in heart and sick in head,
 And with doubts discomforted,
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the house doth sigh and weep,
 And the world is drowned in sleep, 10

¹ The revolution of thousands of years which would bring all things back to the state in which they once were.

Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the artless ¹ doctor sees
 No one hope, but of his fees,
 And his skill runs on the lees, 15
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When his potion and his pill,
 His, or none, or little skill,
 Meet for nothing but to kill, 20
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the passing-bell doth toll,
 And the furies in a shoal
 Come to fright a parting soul,
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tapers now burn blue, 25
 And the comforters are few,
 And that number more than true,
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the priest his last hath prayed,
 And I nod to what is said, 30
 'Cause my speech is now decayed,
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When, God knows, I'm tossed about,
 Either with despair or doubt,
 Yet, before the glass be out, 35
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tempter me pursu'th
 With the sins of all my youth,
 And half damns me with untruth, 40
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the flames and hellish cries
 Fright mine ears and fright mine eyes,
 And all terrors me surprise,
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the Judgment is revealed, 45
 And that opened which was sealed,
 When to thee I have appealed,
 Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

HIS RETURN TO LONDON

From the dull confines of the drooping West,²
 To see the day spring from the pregnant
 East,
 Ravished in spirit I come, nay more, I fly
 To thee, blessed place of my nativity!

¹ unskilful.

² i.e., Devonshire.

Thus, thus with hallowed foot I touch the
ground⁵
With thousand blessings by thy fortune
crowned.
O fruitful genius! that bestowest here
An everlasting plenty year by year;
O place! O people! manners, framed to
please
All nations, customs, kindreds, languages! 10
I am a free-born Roman; suffer then
That I amongst you live a citizen.
London my home is, though by hard fate sent
Into a long and irksome banishment;
Yet since called back, henceforward let me
be, 15
O native country! repossessed by thee;
For, rather than I'll to the West return,
I'll beg of thee first here to have mine urn.
Weak I am grown, and must in short time
fall,
Give thou my sacred relics burial. 20

ON HIMSELF

I will no longer kiss,
I can no longer stay;
The way of all flesh is,
That I must go this day.
Since longer I can't live, 5
My frolic youths, adieu;
My lamp to you I'll give,
And all my troubles too.

TO HIS BOOK

Go thou forth, my book, though late,
Yet be timely fortunate.
It may chance good luck may send
Thee a kinsman or a friend,
That may harbor thee, when I 5
With my fates neglected lie.
If thou know'st not where to dwell,
See, the fire's by. Farewell.

GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)

Herbert, the best writer of religious poetry in English literature, was a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, for a while a pensioner at court, and during the last few years of his life the diligent, scholarly rector of a small country parish. While a follower of the style made popular by his friend Donne, Herbert has an originality and a very high degree of technical skill that is all his own. He wrote some prose, but is best in his religious lyrics, collected under the title *The Temple* and published the year after his death. Izaak Walton wrote an appreciative life of Herbert in 1670. The standard edition of his works is by Professor George Herbert Palmer (Houghton Mifflin Company.)

VIRTUE

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky!
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave, 5
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and
roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie, 10
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to
coal, 15
Then chiefly lives.

LOVE

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew
back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow
slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning, 5
If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be
here:"
Love said, "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my
dear,
I cannot look on Thee!" 10
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord; but I have marred them; let
my shame
Go where it doth deserve."

"And know you not," says Love, "who bore
the blame?" 15
"My dear, then I will serve."
"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste
my meat."
So I did sit and eat.

THE PULLEY

As the title implies, the poem deals with
"God's means of drawing us to himself"
(Palmer).

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
"Let us," said he, "pour on him all we can.
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span." 5

So Strength first made a way;
Then Beauty flowed; then Wisdom, Honor,
Pleasure.

When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay. 10

"For if I should," said he,
"Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be." 15

"Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast." 20

THE COLLAR¹

I struck the board, and cried, "No more;
I will abroad!
What! shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store."² 5
Shall I be still in suit?³
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine 10
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it,
No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted, 15
All wasted?

¹ i.e., restraint. ² abundance.
³ i.e., always petitioning.

Not so, my heart, but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures; leave thy cold dis-
pute 20
Of what is fit and not; forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which petty thoughts have made; and made
to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law, 25
While thou didst wink and wouldst not
see.
Away! take heed!
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's-head there, tie up thy
fears.
He that forbears 30
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load."
But as I raved, and grew more fierce and
wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, "Child";
And I replied, "My Lord." 36

THE QUIP

The merry World did on a day
With his train-bands and mates agree
To meet together where I lay,
And all in sport to jeer at me.
First Beauty crept into a rose, 5
Which when I plucked not, "Sir," said she,
"Tell me, I pray, whose hands are those?"¹
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.
Then Money came, and chinking still,
"What tune is this, poor man?" said he; 10
"I heard in Music you had skill."
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.
Then came brave Glory puffing by
In silks that whistled, who but he!
He scarce allowed me half an eye. 15
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.
Then came quick Wit and Conversation,
And he would needs a comfort be,
And, to be short, make an oration.
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me. 20
Yet when the hour of thy design
To answer these fine things shall come,
Speak not at large; say, "I am thine,"
And then they have their answer home.

¹ i.e., why don't you use your hands?

THE WORLD

Love¹ built a stately house,² where Fortune came;

And spinning fancies, she was heard to say
That her fine cobwebs did support the frame,
Whereas they were supported by the same.

But Wisdom quickly swept them all away. 5

Then Pleasure came, who, liking not the fashion,

Began to make balconies, terraces,
Till she had weakened all by alteration;
But reverend laws, and many a proclamation,
Reformed all at length with menaces. 10

1 i.e., divine love.

2 i.e., the world.

Then entered Sin, and with that sycamore
Whose leaves first sheltered man from
drought and dew,
Working and winding silyly evermore,
The inward walls and summers¹ cleft and
tore;

But Grace shored these, and cut that as it
grew. 15

Then Sin combined with Death in a firm
band

To raze the building to the very floor;
Which they effected, none could them with-
stand.

But Love and Grace took Glory by the hand,
And built a braver palace than before. 20

1 beams.

IZAAK WALTON (1593-1683)

Izaak Walton was born in Stratford, August 9, 1593. He settled in London as an ironmonger, but retired from business after the defeat of the royalists at Marston Moor, and lived in the country, cultivating the tastes which were most markedly his, for clergymen of the Established Church, and for fish. His Lives of such eminent divines as John Donne, George Herbert, and Richard Hooker are excellent examples of biography and portraiture. His most famous work, *The Compleat Angler*, is a study of his favorite pastime and of his own gentle and amusing character. It was first published in 1653, and was expanded through many subsequent editions until his death in 1683, when it was continued by his friend, Charles Cotton. Walton's style is simple and homely compared with the splendors of Browne and Taylor; but it served as a vehicle for one of the best known masterpieces in the English tongue. An edition of *The Compleat Angler* by Andrew Lang appeared in 1896. It is found in Everyman's Library.

THE THIRD DAY — continued

ON THE NATURE AND BREEDING OF THE
TROUT, AND HOW TO FISH FOR HIM

CHAPTER IV

PISCATOR,¹ VENATOR,² MILK-WOMAN,
MAUDLIN, HOSTESS

PISCATOR. The Trout is a fish highly valued, both in this and foreign nations. He may be justly said, as the old poet said of wine, and we English say of venison, to be a generous fish: a fish that is so like the buck, that he also has his seasons; for it is observed, that he comes in and goes out of season with the stag and buck. Gesner³ says, his name is of a German offspring; and says he is a fish that feeds clean and purely, in the swiftest streams, and on the hardest gravel; and that he may justly contend with all fresh water fish, as the Mullet may with all sea fish, for precedence and daintiness of taste; and that

1 angler.

2 huntsman.

3 Conrad Gesner, 1516-65, a lovable naturalist, called the "Pliny of Germany." Walton refers to him often.

being in right season, the most dainty palates have allowed precedence to him.

And before I go farther in my discourse, let me tell you, that you are to observe, that as there be some barren does that are good in summer, so there be some barren Trouts that are good in winter; but there are not many that are so; for usually they be in their perfection in the month of May, and decline with the buck. Now you are to take notice, that in several countries, as in Germany, and in other parts, compared to ours, fish do differ much in their bigness, and shape, and other ways; and so do Trouts. It is well known that in the Lake Lemman, the Lake of Geneva, there are Trouts taken of three cubits long; as is affirmed by Gesner, a writer of good credit: and Mercator¹ says, the Trouts that are taken in the Lake of Geneva are a great part of the merchandize of that famous city. And you are further to know, that there be certain waters that breed Trouts remarkable, both for their number and smallness. I

1 Gerard Mercator (d. 1594), a Flemish mathematician and map-maker.

know a little brook in Kent, that breeds them to a number incredible, and you may take them twenty or forty in an hour, but none greater than about the size of a Gudgeon. There are also, in divers rivers, especially that relate to, or be near to the sea, as Winchester, or the Thames about Windsor, a little Trout called a Samlet, or Skegger Trout, in both which places I have caught twenty or forty at a standing, that will bite as fast and as freely as Minnows: these be by some taken to be young Salmons; but in those waters they never grow to be bigger than a Herring.

There is also in Kent, near to Canterbury, a Trout called there a Fordidge Trout, a Trout that bears the name of the town where it is usually caught, that is accounted the rarest of fish; many of them near the bigness of a Salmon, but known by their different colour; and in their best season they cut very white: and none of these have been known to be caught with an angle, unless it were one that was caught by Sir George Hastings, an excellent angler, and now with God: and he hath told me he thought that Trout bit not for hunger but wantonness; and it is the rather to be believed, because both he, then, and many others before him, have been curious to search into their bellies, what the food was by which they lived; and have found out nothing by which they might satisfy their curiosity.

Concerning which you are to take notice, that it is reported by good authors, that grasshoppers and some fish have no mouths, but are nourished and take breath by the porousness of their gills, man knows not how: and this may be believed, if we consider that when the raven hath hatched her eggs, she takes no further care, but leaves her young ones to the care of the God of nature, who is said, in the Psalms, "to feed the young ravens that call upon him." And they be kept alive and fed by a dew; or worms that breed in their nests; or some other ways that we mortals know not. And this may be believed of the Fordidge Trout, which, as it is said of the stork, that he knows his season, so he knows his times, I think almost his day of coming into that river out of the sea; where he lives, and, it is like, feeds, nine months of the year, and fasts three in the river of Fordidge. And you are to note, that those townsmen are very punctual in observing the time of beginning to fish for them; and boast much, that their river affords a Trout that exceeds all others. And just so does Sussex boast of

several fish; as, namely, a Shelsey Cockle, a Chichester Lobster, an Arundel Mullet, and an Amerly Trout.

And, now, for some confirmation of the Fordidge Trout: you are to know that this Trout is thought to eat nothing in the fresh water; and it may be the better believed, because it is well known, that swallows, and bats, and wagtails, which are called half-year birds, and not seen to fly in England for six months in the year, but about Michaelmas leave us for a hotter climate, yet some of them that have been left behind their fellows, have been found, many thousands at a time, in hollow trees, or clay caves, where they have been observed to live, and sleep out the whole winter, without meat. And so Albertus¹ observes, That there is one kind of frog that hath her mouth naturally shut up about the end of August, and that she lives so all the winter: and though it be strange to some, yet it is known to too many among us to be doubted.

And so much for these Fordidge Trouts, which never afford an angler sport, but either live their time of being in the fresh water, by their meat formerly gotten in the sea, not unlike the swallow or frog, or, by the virtue of the fresh water only; or, as the birds of Paradise and theameleon are said to live, by the sun and the air.

There is also in Northumberland a Trout called a Bull-trout, of a much greater length and bigness than any in these southern parts; and there are, in many rivers that relate to the sea, Salmon-trouts, as much different from others, both in shape and in their spots, as we see sheep in some countries differ one from another in their shape and bigness, and in the fineness of the wool: and, certainly, as some pastures breed larger sheep, so do some rivers, by reason of the ground over which they run, breed larger Trouts.

Now the next thing that I will commend to your consideration is, that the Trout is of a more sudden growth than other fish. Concerning which, you are also to take notice, that he lives not so long as the Pearch, and divers other fishes do, as Sir Francis Bacon hath observed in his History of Life and Death.

And next you are to take notice, that he is not like the Crocodile, which if he lives never so long, yet always thrives till his death: but 'tis not so with the Trout; for after he is come to his full growth, he declines in his body, and

¹ Albertus Magnus, 1193-1280, a German scholastic philosopher.

keeps his bigness, or thrives only in his head till his death. And you are to know, that he will, about, especially before, the time of his spawning, get, almost miraculously, through weirs and flood-gates, against the stream; even through such high and swift places as is almost incredible. Next, that the Trout usually spawns about October or November, but in some rivers a little sooner or later; which is the more observable, because most other fish spawn in the spring or summer, when the sun hath warmed both the earth and water, and made it fit for generation. And you are to note, that he continues many months out of season; for it may be observed of the Trout, that he is like the Buck or the Ox, that will not be fat in many months, though he go in the very same pastures that horses do, which will be fat in one month; and so you may observe, That most other fishes recover strength, and grow sooner fat and in season than the Trout doth.

And next you are to note, That till the sun gets to such a height as to warm the earth and the water, the Trout is sick, and lean, and lousy, and unwholesome; for you shall, in winter, find him to have a big head, and, then, to be lank and thin and lean; at which time many of them have sticking on them Sugs, or Trout-lice; which is a kind of a worm, in shape like a clove, or pin with a big head, and sticks close to him, and sucks his moisture; those, I think, the Trout breeds himself; and never thrives till he free himself from them, which is when warm weather comes; and, then, as he grows stronger, he gets from the dead still water into the sharp streams and the gravel, and, there, rubs off these worms or lice; and then, as he grows stronger, so he gets him into swifter and swifter streams, and there lies at the watch for any fly or minnow that comes near to him; and he especially loves the May-fly, which is bred of the cod-worm, or cadis; and these make the Trout bold and lusty, and he is usually fatter and better meat at the end of that month than at any time of the year.

Now you are to know that it is observed, that usually the best Trouts are either red or yellow; though some, as the Fordidge Trout, be white and yet good; but that is not usual: and it is a note observable, that the female Trout hath usually a less head, and a deeper body than the male Trout, and is usually the better meat. And note, that a hog back and a little head, to either Trout, Salmon or any other fish, is a sign that that fish is in season.

But yet you are to note, that as you see some willows or palm-trees bud and blossom sooner than others do, so some Trouts be, in rivers, sooner in season: and as some hollies, or oaks, are longer before they cast their leaves, so are some Trouts, in rivers, longer before they go out of season.

And you are to note, that there are several kinds of Trouts: but these several kinds are not considered but by very few men; for they go under the general name of Trouts; just as pigeons do, in most places; though it is certain, there are tame and wild pigeons; and of the tame, there be helmits and runts, and carriers and coppers, and indeed too many to name. Nay, the Royal Society have found and published lately, that there be thirty and three kinds of spiders; and yet all, for aught I know, go under that one general name of spider. And it is so with many kinds of fish, and of Trouts especially; which differ in their bigness, and shape, and spots, and colour. The great Kentish hens may be an instance, compared to other hens: and, doubtless, there is a kind of small Trout, which will never thrive to be big; that breeds very many more than others do, that be of a larger size: which you may rather believe, if you consider that the little wren and titmouse will have twenty young ones at a time, when, usually, the noble hawk, or the musical thrassel or black-bird, exceed not four or five.

And now you shall see me try my skill to catch a Trout; and at my next walking, either this evening or to-morrow morning, I will give you direction how you yourself shall fish for him.

VENATOR. Trust me, master, I see now it is a harder matter to catch a Trout than a Chub; for I have put on patience, and followed you these two hours, and not seen a fish stir, neither at your minnow nor your worm.

PISCATOR. Well, scholar, you must endure worse luck sometime, or you will never make a good angler. But what say you now? there is a Trout now, and a good one too, if I can but hold him; and two or three trouts more will tire him. Now you see he lies still, and the sleight is to land him: reach me that landing-net. So, Sir, now he is mine own: what say you now, is not this worth all my labour and your patience?

VENATOR. On my word, master, this is a gallant Trout; what shall we do with him?

PISCATOR. Marry, e'en eat him to supper: we'll go to my hostess from whence we came; she told me, as I was going out of door, that.

my brother Peter, a good angler and a cheerful companion, had sent word he would lodge there to-night, and bring a friend with him. My hostess has two beds, and I know you and I may have the best: we'll rejoice with my brother Peter and his friend, tell tales, or sing ballads, or make a catch, or find some harmless sport to content us, and pass away a little time without offence to God or man.

VENATOR. A match, good master, let's go to that house, for the linen looks white, and smells of lavender, and I long to lie in a pair of sheets that smell so. Let's be going, good master, for I am hungry again with fishing.

PISCATOR. Nay, stay a little, good scholar. I caught my last Trout with a worm; now I will put on a minnow, and try a quarter of an hour about yonder trees for another; and, so, walk towards our lodging. Look you, scholar, thereabout we shall have a bite presently, or not at all. Have with you, Sir: o' my word I have hold of him. Oh! it is a great logger-headed Chub; come, hang him upon that willow twig, and let's be going. But turn out of the way a little, good scholar! toward yonder high honeysuckle hedge; there we'll sit and sing, whilst this shower falls so gently upon the teeming earth, and gives yet a sweeter smell to the lovely flowers that adorn these verdant meadows.

Look! under that broad beech-tree I sat down, when I was last this way a-fishing; and the birds in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow tree near to the brow of that primrose-hill. There I sat viewing the silver streams glide silently towards their centre, the tempestuous sea; yet sometimes opposed by rugged roots and pebble-stones, which broke their waves, and turned them into foam; and sometimes I beguiled time by viewing the harmless lambs; some leaping securely in the cool shade, whilst others sported themselves in the cheerful sun; and saw others craving comfort from the swollen udders of their bleating dams. As I thus sat, these and other sights had so fully possess my soul with content, that I thought, as the poet has happily express it,

I was for that time lifted above earth;
And possess joys not promised in my birth.

As I left this place, and entered into the next field, a second pleasure entertained me; 'twas a handsome milk-maid, that had not yet attained so much age and wisdom as to load her mind with any fears of many things that will never be, as too many men too often

do; but she cast away all care, and sung like a nightingale. Her voice was good, and the ditty fitted for it; it was that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlow, now at least fifty years ago; and the milk-maid's mother sung an answer to it, which was made by Sir Walter Raleigh, in his younger days. They were old-fashioned poetry, but choicely good; I think much better than the strong lines that are now in fashion in this critical age. Look yonder! on my word, yonder, they both be a-milking again. I will give her the Chub, and persuade them to sing those two songs to us.

God speed you, good woman! I have been a-fishing; and am going to Bleak Hall to my bed; and having caught more fish than will sup myself and my friend, I will bestow this upon you and your daughter, for I use to sell none.

MILK-WOMAN. Marry! God requite you, Sir, and we'll eat it cheerfully. And if you come this way a-fishing two months hence, a grace of God! I'll give you a syllabub of new verjuice,¹ in a new-made hay-cock, for it. And my Maudlin shall sing you one of her best ballads; for she and I both love all anglers, they be such honest, civil, quiet men. In the meantime will you drink a draught of red cow's milk? you shall have it freely.

PISCATOR. No, I thank you; but, I pray, do us a courtesy that shall stand you and your daughter in nothing, and yet we will think ourselves still something in your debt: it is but to sing us a song that was sung by your daughter when I last passed over this meadow, about eight or nine days since.

MILK-WOMAN. What song was it, I pray? Was it, "Come, Shepherds, deck your herds"? or, "As at noon *Dulcina* rested"? or, "Phillida flouts me"? or, "Chevy Chase"? or, "Johnny Armstrong"? or, "Troy Town"?²

PISCATOR. No, it is none of those; it is a Song that your daughter sung the first part, and you sung the answer to it.

MILK-WOMAN. O, I know it now. I learned the first part in my golden age, when I was about the age of my poor daughter; and the latter part, which indeed fits me best now, but two or three years ago, when the cares of the world began to take hold of me: but you shall, God willing, hear them both; and sung as well as we can, for we both love anglers. Come Maudlin, sing the first part

¹ fruit-juice.

² Old English songs, most of which can be found in *Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.

to the gentlemen, with a merry heart; and
I'll sing the second when you have done.

THE MILK-MAID'S SONG¹

Come, live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That valleys, groves, or hills, or fields,
Or woods, and steepy mountains yields;

Where we will sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed our flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses;
And, then, a thousand fragrant posies;
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle,
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Slippers, lined choicely for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
With coral clasps, and amber studs.
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come, live with me, and be my love.

Thy silver dishes, for thy meat,
As precious as the Gods do eat,
Shall, on an ivy table, be
Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight, each May morning.
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love.

VENATOR. Trust me, master, it is a choice
song, and sweetly sung by honest Maudlin.
I now see it was not without cause that our
good queen Elizabeth did so often wish her-
self a milk-maid all the month of May, be-
cause they are not troubled with fears and
cares, but sing sweetly all the day, and sleep
securely all the night: and without doubt,
honest, innocent, pretty Maudlin does so.
I'll bestow Sir Thomas Overbury's² milk-
maid's wish upon her, "that she may die in
the Spring; and, being dead, may have good
store of flowers stuck round about her
winding-sheet."

THE MILK-MAID'S MOTHER'S ANSWER.³

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee, and be thy love.

¹ See the note on Marlowe, p. 276.

² Overbury, 1581-1613, remembered for his *Characters*, essayistic descriptions of men and women.

³ Like Marlowe's song, taken from *England's Helicon*, 1600. In some copies the poem is signed S.W.R.; in others, the initials are covered by a slip marked *Ignoto*.

But Time drives flocks from field to fold;
When rivers rage, and rocks grow cold;
Then Philomel becometh dumb;
And age complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields.
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten;
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw, and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps, and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee, and be thy love.

What should we talk of dainties, then,
Of better meat than's fit for men?
These are but vain: that's only good
Which God hath blessed, and sent for food.

But could youth last, and love still breed;
Had joys no date, nor age no need;
Then those delights my mind might move
To live with thee, and be thy love.

MOTHER. Well! I have done my song.
But stay, honest anglers; for I will make
Maudlin sing you one short song more.
Maudlin! sing that song that you sung last
night, when young Coridon the shepherd
played so purely on his oaten pipe to you
and your cousin Betty.

MAUDLIN. I will, mother.

I married a wife of late,
The more's my unhappy fate:
I married her for love,
As my fancy did me move,
And not for a worldly estate:

But oh! the green sickness
Soon changed her likeness;
And all her beauty did fail.
But 'tis not so
With those that go
Thro' frost and snow,
As all men know,
And carry the milking-pail.

PISCATOR. Well sung, good woman; I
thank you. I'll give you another dish of fish
one of these days; and then beg another song
of you. Come, scholar! let Maudlin alone:
do not you offer to spoil her voice. Look!
yonder comes mine hostess, to call us to
supper. How now! is my brother Peter come?

HOSTESS. Yes, and a friend with him.
They are both glad to hear that you are in
these parts; and long to see you; and long to
be at supper, for they be very hungry.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE (1605-1682)

Thomas Browne, distinguished both as writer and physician, was born October 19, 1605. He was sent to Winchester School and Pembroke College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1626. He studied medicine, and spent some time in travel. After his return he settled in Norwich, where he continued to live quietly as physician and scholar, until his death in 1682. He was knighted by King Charles II in 1671.

Browne's most famous work, the *Religio Medici*, written as "a private exercise directed to myself," was printed without his consent in 1642. This forced him to issue an authorized and corrected edition in 1643. It is a long meditation upon his own character and experience, revealing a fascinating and baffling personality. As a physician and man of science Browne was endlessly curious and skeptical, but he was also a mystic. His other works are marked by the same mixture of curiosity and enthusiasm. The longest of them, the *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* or *Vulgar Errors* is a survey of folk superstitions; *Urn Burial* is an essay on burial customs inspired by the discovery of sepulchral urns in Norfolk; *A Letter to a Friend* is a minute account of the phenomena exhibited in the death of a young man, his patient.

In Sir Thomas Browne's writings the rich, elaborate, prose style for which the seventeenth century was noted reached its height. In gorgeous vocabulary and sustained rhythm it employed the resources of poetry, and became a model for later writers of poetic or imaginative prose.

Sir Thomas Browne's works are published in collected editions by Simon Wilkin in Bohn's Library and by Charles Sayle in the English Library. The *Religio Medici* is included in the Golden Treasury Series, and in Everyman's Library. There are essays on Browne by Thomas De Quincey and Walter Pater, both of whom were influenced by him in their art of prose writing.

From RELIGIO MEDICI

The essay consists of seventy-five sections, the first eighteen of which appear below.

For my religion, though there be several circumstances that might persuade the world I have none at all, as the general scandal of my profession, the natural course of my studies, the indifferency of my behavior and discourse in matters of religion, neither violently defending one, nor with that common ardor and contention opposing another; yet in despite hereof, I dare, without usurpation, assume the honorable style of a Christian. Not that I merely owe this title to the font, my education, or clime wherein I was born, as being bred up either to confirm those principles my parents instilled into my understanding, or by a general consent proceed in the religion of my country; but having in my riper years and confirmed judgment, seen and examined all, I find myself obliged by the principles of grace, and the law of mine own reason, to embrace no other name but this: neither doth herein my zeal so far make me forget the general charity I owe unto humanity, as rather to hate than pity Turks, infidels, and (what is worse) Jews; rather contenting myself to enjoy that happy style, than maligning those who refuse so glorious a title.

SECT. 2. — But, because the name of a Christian is become too general to express our faith, there being a geography of religion as well as lands, and every clime distinguished not only by their laws and limits, but circum-

scribed by their doctrines and rules of faith; to be particular, I am of that reformed new-cast religion,¹ wherein I dislike nothing but the name; of the same belief our Savior taught, the apostles disseminated, the fathers authorized, and the martyrs confirmed, but by the sinister ends of princes, the ambition and avarice of prelates, and the fatal corruption of times, so decayed, impaired, and fallen from its native beauty, that it required the careful and charitable hands of these times to restore it to its primitive integrity. Now the accidental occasion whereupon, the slender means whereby, the low and abject condition of the person² by whom so good a work was set on foot, which in our adversaries beget contempt and scorn, fills me with wonder, and is the very same objection the insolent pagans first cast at Christ and his disciples.

Yet have I not so shaken hands with those desperate resolutions,³ who had rather venture at large their decayed bottom,⁴ than bring her in to be new trimmed in the dock; who had rather promiscuously retain all, than abridge any, and obstinately be what they are, than what they have been, as to stand in diameter and swords point with them. We have reformed from them, not against them; for omitting those impropriations,⁵ and terms of scurrility betwixt us, which only difference our affections, and not our cause, there is between us one common name and

¹ Protestant.

² Luther.

³ i.e. men of desperate resolutions.

⁴ ship.

⁵ insults.

appellation, one faith and necessary body of principles common to us both. And therefore I am not scrupulous to converse and live with them, to enter their churches in defect of ours, and either pray with them, or for them. I could never perceive any rational consequence from those many texts which prohibit the Children of Israel to pollute themselves with the temples of the heathens; we being all Christians, and not divided by such detested impieties as might profane our prayers, or the place wherein we make them; or that a resolved conscience may not adore her Creator anywhere, especially in places devoted to his service; where if their devotions offend him, mine may please him; if theirs profane it, mine may hallow it; holy-water and crucifix (dangerous to the common people) deceive not my judgment, nor abuse my devotion at all. I am, I confess, naturally inclined to that which misguided zeal terms superstition: my common conversation I do acknowledge austere, my behavior full of rigor, sometimes not without morosity; yet at my devotion I love to use the civility of my knee, my hat, and hand, with all those outward and sensible motions which may express or promote any invisible devotion. I should violate my own arm rather than a church, nor willingly deface the name of saint or martyr. At the sight of a cross or crucifix I can dispense with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Savior: I cannot laugh at, but rather pity the fruitless journeys of pilgrims, or condemn the miserable condition of friars; for though misplaced in circumstances, there is something in it of devotion. I could never hear the Ave-Mary bell ¹ without an elevation, or think it a sufficient warrant, because they erred in one circumstance, for me to err in all, that is, in silence and dumb contempt. Whilst therefore they direct their devotions to her, I offer mine to God, and rectify the errors of their prayers, by rightly ordering mine own. At a solemn procession I have wept abundantly, while my consorts, blind with opposition and prejudice, have fallen into an excess of scorn and laughter. There are questionless, both in Greek, Roman, and African churches, solemnities and ceremonies, whereof the wiser zeals do make a Christian use, and stand condemned by us, not as evil in themselves, but as allurements and baits of superstition

to those vulgar heads that look askint on the face of truth, and those unstable judgments that cannot resist in the narrow point and center of virtue without a reel or stagger to the circumference.

As there were many reformers, so likewise many reformations; every country proceeding in a particular way and method, according as their national interest, together with their constitution and clime inclined them; some angrily, and with extremity; others calmly, and with mediocrity, not rending but easily dividing the community, and leaving an honest possibility of a reconciliation; which though peaceable spirits do desire, and may conceive that revolution of time and the mercies of God may effect, yet that judgment that shall consider the present antipathies between the two extremes, their contrarieties in condition, affection and opinion, may with the same hopes expect a union in the poles of heaven.

But to difference myself nearer, ¹ and draw into a lesser circle: there is no church, whose every part so squares unto my conscience; whose articles, constitutions, and customs seem so consonant unto reason, and as it were framed to my particular devotion, as this whereof I hold my belief, the Church of England, to whose faith I am a sworn subject, and therefore, in a double obligation, subscribe unto her articles, and endeavor to observe her constitutions: whatsoever is beyond, as points indifferent, I observe, according to the rules of my private reason, or the humor and fashion of my devotion; neither believing this because Luther affirmed it, nor disapproving that because Calvin hath disavouched it. I condemn not all things in the council of Trent, ² nor approve all in the synod of Dort. ³ In brief, where the Scripture is silent, the church is my text; where that speaks, 'tis but my comment; where there is a joint silence of both, I borrow not the rules of my religion from Rome or Geneva, but from the dictates of my own reason. It is an unjust scandal of our adversaries, and a gross error in ourselves, to compute the nativity of our religion from Henry the Eighth; who, though he rejected the Pope, refused not the faith of Rome, and effected no more than what his own predecessors desired and essayed in ages

¹ "A church bell that tolls every day at six and twelve of the clock; at the hearing whereof, every one in what place soever, either of house or street, betakes himself to his prayer, which is commonly directed to the Virgin." — (Browne's note).

¹ to define more closely.

² This council, held at Trent in the Tyrol, 1545-63, decided against the ideas of the Reformation.

³ The meeting, held at Dort in the Netherlands, 1618-19, condemned the doctrines of Arminius, the Leyden remonstrant.

past, and it was conceived the state of Venice would have attempted in our days.¹ It is as uncharitable a point in us to fall upon those popular scurrilities and opprobrious scoffs of the Bishop of Rome, to whom, as a temporal prince, we owe the duty of good language. I confess there is a cause of passion² between us; by his sentence I stand excommunicated; heretic is the best language he affords me: yet can no ear witness I ever returned to him the name of antichrist, man of sin, or whore of Babylon. It is the method of charity to suffer without reaction: those usual satires and invectives of the pulpit may perchance produce a good effect on the vulgar, whose ears are opener to rhetoric than logic; yet do they, in no wise, confirm the faith of wiser believers, who know that a good cause needs not be patroned by passion, but can sustain itself upon a temperate dispute.

SECT. 6. — I could never divide myself from any man upon the difference of an opinion, or be angry with his judgment for not agreeing with me in that from which, perhaps, within a few days, I should dissent myself. I have no genius to disputes in religion: and have often thought it wisdom to decline them, especially upon a disadvantage, or when the cause of truth might suffer in the weakness of my patronage. Where we desire to be informed, 'tis good to contest with men above ourselves; but, to confirm and establish our opinions, 'tis best to argue with judgments below our own, that the frequent spoils and victories over their reasons may settle in ourselves an esteem and confirmed opinion of our own. Every man is not a proper champion for truth, nor fit to take up the gauntlet in the cause of verity; many, from the ignorance of these maxims, and an inconsiderate zeal unto truth, have too rashly charged the troops of error and remain as trophies unto the enemies of truth. A man may be in as just possession of truth as of a city, and yet be forced to surrender; 'tis therefore far better to enjoy her with peace than to hazard her on a battle. If, therefore, there rise any doubts in my way, I do forget them, or at least defer them, till my better settled judgment and more manly reason be able to resolve them; for I perceive every man's own reason is his best *Edipus*,³ and will upon a reasonable truce, find a way to loose those bonds wherewith the subtleties of error have enchained our more flexible and

tender judgments. In philosophy, where truth seems doublefaced, there is no man more paradoxical than myself: but in divinity I love to keep the road; and, though not in an implicit, yet an humble faith, follow the great wheel of the church, by which I move; not reserving any proper poles, or motion from the epicycle⁴ of my own brain. By this means I leave no gap for heresy, schisms or errors, of which at present, I hope I shall not injure truth to say, I have no taint or tincture. I must confess my greener studies have been polluted with two or three; not any begotten in the latter centuries, but old and obsolete, such as could never have been revived but by such extravagant and irregular heads as mine. For, indeed, heresies perish not with their authors; but, like the river *Arethusa*,² though they lose their currents in one place, they rise up again in another. One general council is not able to extirpate one single heresy: it may be cancelled for the present; but revolution of time, and the like aspects from heaven, will restore it, when it will flourish till it be condemned again. For, as though there were a metempsychosis, and the soul of one man passed into another, opinions do find, after certain revolutions, men and minds like those that first begat them. To see ourselves again, we need not look for Plato's year:³ every man is not only himself; there have been many *Diogeneses*, and as many *Timons*, though but few of that name; men are lived over again; the world is now as it was in ages past; there was none then, but there hath been some one since, that parallels him, and is, as it were, his revived self.

SECT. 7. — Now, the first of mine⁴ was that of the Arabians, that the souls of men perished with their bodies, but should yet be raised again at the last day: not that I did absolutely conceive a mortality of the soul, but, if that were (which faith, not philosophy, hath yet thoroughly disproved), and that both entered the grave together, yet I held the same conceit thereof that we all do of the body, that it should rise again. Surely it is but the merits of our unworthy natures, if we sleep in darkness until the last alarm. A serious reflex upon my own unworthiness did make me backward from challenging this prerogative of my soul: so that I might enjoy

¹ i.e., figures taken from Ptolemaic astronomy.

² Supposed to flow from Greece to Sicily, under the sea.

³ "A revolution of certain thousand years, when all things should return unto their former estate, and he be teaching again in his school, as when he delivered this opinion." — (Browne's note).

⁴ i.e., heresies.

¹ Referring to a quarrel between the Pope and Venice in 1606.

² anger.

³ solver of perplexities.

my Savior at the last, I could with patience be nothing almost unto eternity. The second was that of Origen;¹ that God would not persist in his vengeance for ever, but, after a definite time of his wrath, would release the damned souls from torture; which error I fell into upon a serious contemplation of the great attribute of God, his mercy; and did a little cherish it in myself, because I found therein no malice, and a ready weight to sway me from the other extreme of despair whereunto melancholy and contemplative natures are too easily disposed. A third there is, which I did never positively maintain or practise, but have often wished it had been consonant to truth, and not offensive to my religion; and that is, the prayer for the dead; whereunto I was inclined from some charitable inducements, whereby I could scarce contain my prayers for a friend at the ringing of a bell, or behold his corpse without an orison for his soul. 'Twas a good way, methought, to be remembered by posterity, and far more noble than a history. These opinions I never maintained with pertinacity, or endeavored to inveigle any man's belief unto mine, nor so much as ever revealed, or disputed them with my dearest friends; by which means I neither propagated them in others, nor confirmed them in myself: but, suffering them to flame upon their own substance, without addition of new fuel, they went out insensibly of themselves; therefore these opinions, though condemned by lawful councils, were not heresies in me, but bare errors, and single lapses of my understanding, without a joint depravity of my will. Those have not only depraved understandings, but diseased affections, which cannot enjoy a singularity without a heresy, or be the author of an opinion without they be of a sect also. This was the villany of the first schism of Lucifer; who was not content to err alone, but drew into his faction many legions of spirits; and upon this experience he tempted only Eve, well understanding the communicable nature of sin, and that to deceive but one was tacitly and upon consequence to delude them both.

SECT. 8. — That heresies should arise, we have the prophecy of Christ; but, that old ones should be abolished, we hold no prediction. That there must be heresies, is true, not only in our church, but also in any other: even in the doctrines heretical there will be superheresies; and Arians, not only divided from the church, but also among themselves:

for heads that are disposed unto schism, and complexionally propense to innovation, are naturally indisposed for a community; nor will be ever confined unto the order or economy of one body; and therefore, when they separate from others, they knit but loosely among themselves; nor contented with a general breach or dichotomy² with their church, do subdivide and mince themselves almost into atoms. 'Tis true, that men of singular parts and humors have not been free from singular opinions and conceits in all ages; retaining something, not only beside the opinion of their own church, or any other, but also any particular author; which, notwithstanding, a sober judgment may do without offence or heresy; for there are yet, after all the decrees of councils, and the niceties of the schools, many things, untouched, unimagined, wherein the liberty of an honest reason may play and expatiate with security, and far without the circle of a heresy.

SECT. 9. — As for those wingy mysteries in divinity, and airy subtleties in religion, which have unhinged the brains of better heads, they never stretched the *pia mater*² of mine. Methinks there be not impossibilities enough in religion for an active faith: the deepest mysteries ours contains have not only been illustrated, but maintained, by syllogism and the rule of reason. I love to lose myself in a mystery; to pursue my reason to an *O altitudo*!³ 'Tis my solitary recreation to pose my apprehension with those involved enigmas and riddles of the Trinity — incarnation and resurrection. I can answer all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian,⁴ *Certum est quia impossibile est*.⁵ I desire to exercise my faith in the difficultest point; for, to credit ordinary and visible objects is not faith, but persuasion. Some believe the better for seeing Christ's sepulchre; and, when they have seen the Red Sea, doubt not of the miracle. Now, contrarily, I bless myself, and am thankful, that I lived not in the days of miracles; that I never saw Christ nor his disciples. I would not have been one of those Israelites that passed the Red Sea; nor one of Christ's patients, on whom he wrought his wonders: then had my faith been thrust upon me; nor should I enjoy that greater blessing pronounced to all that be-

¹ division.

² The inner membrane covering the brain.

³ "What a height;" i.e., the point beyond which human reason cannot go.

⁴ Early church father.

⁵ It is true, because it is impossible.

¹ One of the early church fathers, third century A.D.

lieve and saw not. 'Tis an easy and necessary belief, to credit what our eye and sense hath examined. I believe he was dead, and buried, and rose again; and desire to see him in his glory, rather than to contemplate him in his cenotaph or sepulchre. Nor is this much to believe; as we have reason, we owe this faith unto history: they only had the advantage of a bold and noble faith, who lived before his coming, who, upon obscure prophesies and mystical types, could raise a belief, and expect apparent impossibilities.

SECT. 10. — 'Tis true, there is an edge in all firm belief, and with an easy metaphor we may say, the sword of faith; but in these obscurities I rather use it in the adjunct the apostle gives it, a buckler; under which I conceive a wary combatant may lie invulnerable. Since I was of understanding to know that we know nothing, my reason hath been more pliable to the will of faith: I am now content to understand a mystery, without a rigid definition, in an easy and Platonic description. That allegorical description of Hermes¹ pleaseth me beyond all the metaphysical definitions of divines. Where I cannot satisfy my reason, I love to humor my fancy: I had as lieve you tell me that *anima est angelus hominis, est corpus Dei*,² as *ἐντελέχεια*,³ — *lux est umbra Dei*,⁴ as *actus perspicui*.⁵ Where there is an obscurity too deep for our reason, 'tis good to sit down with a description, periphrasis, or adumbration; for, by acquainting our reason how unable it is to display the visible and obvious effects of nature, it becomes more humble and submissive unto the subtleties of faith: and thus I teach my haggard and unreclaimed reason to stoop unto the lure of faith. I believe there was already a tree, whose fruit our unhappy parents tasted, though, in the same chapter where God forbids it, 'tis positively said, the plants of the field were not yet grown; for God had not caused it to rain upon the earth. I believe that the serpent (if we shall literally understand it), from his proper form and figure, made his motion on his belly, before the curse. I find the trial of the pucelage⁶ and virginity of women, which God ordained the Jews, is very fallible.

Experience and history informs me that, not only many particular women, but likewise whole nations, have escaped the curse of childbirth, which God seems to pronounce upon the whole sex; yet do I believe that all this is true, which, indeed, my reason would persuade me to be false: and this, I think, is no vulgar part of faith, to believe a thing not only above, but contrary to, reason, and against the arguments of our proper senses.

SECT. 11. — In my solitary and retired imagination (*neque enim cum porticus aut me lectulus accepit, desum mihi*),¹ I remember I am not alone; and therefore forget not to contemplate him and his attributes, who is ever with me, especially those two mighty ones, his wisdom and eternity. With the one I recreate, with the other I confound, my understanding: for who can speak of eternity without a solecism, or think thereof without an ecstasy? Time we may comprehend; 'tis but five days older than ourselves, and hath the same horoscope with the world; but, to retire so far back as to apprehend a beginning, — to give such an infinite start forwards as to conceive an end, — in an essence that we affirm hath neither the one nor the other, it puts my reason to St. Paul's sanctuary:² my philosophy dares not say the angels can do it. God hath not made a creature that can comprehend him; 'tis a privilege of his own nature: "I am that I am" was his own definition unto Moses; and 'twas a short one to confound mortality, that durst question God, or ask him what he was. Indeed, he only is; all others have and shall be; but, in eternity, there is no distinction of tenses; and therefore that terrible term, predestination, which hath troubled so many weak heads to conceive, and the wisest to explain, is in respect to God no prescious determination of our estates to come, but a definite blast of his will already fulfilled, and at the instant that he first decreed it; for, to his eternity, which is indivisible, and altogether, the last trump is already sounded, the reprobates in the flame, and the blessed in Abraham's bosom. St. Peter speaks modestly, when he saith, "a thousand years to God are but as one day;" for, to speak like a philosopher, those continued instances of time, which flow into a thousand years, make not to him one moment. What to us is to come, to his eternity is present; his whole duration being

¹ "Sphæra cujus centrum ubique, circumferentia nullibi." — (Browne's note).

(A sphere whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere.) Hermes Trismegistus, a writer of the fourth century A.D., is the supposed father of alchemy.

² The soul is the angel of man; it is the body of God.

³ "the actual being," Aristotle's term for the soul.

⁴ Light is the shadow of God.

⁵ "transparent phenomena," Aristotle's definition of light.

⁶ virginity.

¹ For even when my porch or couch receives me, I remember myself.

² i.e., I go to the Apostle for comfort.

but one permanent point, without succession, parts, flux, or division.

SECT. 12. — There is no attribute that adds more difficulty to the mystery of the Trinity, where, though in a relative way of Father and Son, we must deny a priority. I wonder how Aristotle could conceive the world eternal, or how he could make good two eternities. His similitude, of a triangle comprehended in a square, doth somewhat illustrate the trinity of our souls, and that the triple unity of God; for there is in us not three, but a trinity of souls; because there is in us, if not three distinct souls, yet differing faculties, that can and do subsist apart in different subjects, and yet in us are thus united as to make but one soul and substance. If one soul were so perfect as to inform three distinct bodies, that were a petty trinity. Conceive the distinct number of three, not divided nor separated by the intellect, but actually comprehended in its unity, and that is a perfect trinity. I have often admired the mystical way of Pythagoras, and the secret magic of numbers. "Beware of philosophy," is a precept not to be received in too large a sense: for, in this mass of nature, there is a set of things that carry in their front, though not in capital letters, yet in stenography and short characters, something of divinity; which, to wiser reasons, serve as luminaries in the abyss of knowledge, and, to judicious beliefs, as scales and runnels¹ to mount the pinnacles and highest pieces of divinity. The severe schools shall never laugh me out of the philosophy of Hermes, that this visible world is but a picture of the invisible, wherein, as in a portrait, things are not truly, but in equivocal shapes, and as they counterfeit some real substance in that invisible fabric.

SECT. 13. — That other attribute, where-with I recreate my devotion, is his wisdom, in which I am happy; and for the contemplation of this only do not repent me that I was bred in the way of study. The advantage I have of the vulgar, with the content and happiness I conceive therein, is an ample recompense for all my endeavors, in what part of knowledge soever. Wisdom is his most beauteous attribute: no man can attain unto it: yet Solomon pleased God when he desired it. He is wise, because he knows all things; and he knoweth all things, because he made them all: but his greatest knowledge is in comprehending that he made not, that is, himself. And this is also the greatest

¹ ladders.

knowledge in man. For this do I honor my own profession, and embrace the counsel even of the devil himself: had he read such a lecture in Paradise as he did at Delphos,² we had better known ourselves; nor had we stood in fear to know him. I know God is wise in all; wonderful in what we conceive, but far more in what we comprehend not: for we behold him but asquint, upon reflex or shadow; our understanding is dimmer than Moses's eye; we are ignorant of the back parts or lower side of his divinity; therefore, to pry into the maze of his counsels, is not only folly in man, but presumption even in angels. Like us, they are his servants, not his senators; he holds no counsel, but that mystical one of the Trinity, wherein, though there be three persons, there is but one mind that decrees without contradiction. Nor needs he any; his actions are not begot with deliberation; his wisdom naturally knows what's best: his intellect stands ready fraught with the superlative and purest ideas of goodness: consultation and election, which are two motions in us, make but one in him: his actions springing from his power at the first touch of his will. These are contemplations metaphysical: my humble speculations have another method, and are content to trace and discover those expressions he hath left in his creatures, and the obvious effects of nature. There is no danger to profound³ these mysteries, no *sanctum sanctorum*³ in philosophy. The world was made to be inhabited by beasts, but studied and contemplated by man: 'tis the debt of⁴ our reason we owe unto God, and the homage we pay for not being beasts. Without this, the world is still as though it had not been, or as it was before the sixth day, when as yet there was not a creature that could conceive or say there was a world. The wisdom of God receives small honor from those vulgar heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire his works. Those highly magnify him, whose judicious enquiry into his acts, and deliberate research into his creatures, return the duty of a devout and learned admiration. Therefore,

Search while thou wilt; and let thy reason go,
To ransom truth, e'en to th' abyss below;
Rally the scattered causes; and that line
Which nature twists be able to untwine.
It is thy Maker's will; for unto none
But unto reason can he e'er be known.

¹ Γνωθὶ σεαυτὸν. Nosce teipsum. — (Browne's note). (Know thyself.)

² to sound, investigate. ³ holy of holies. ⁴ for.

The devils do know thee; but those damned
meteors
Build not thy glory, but confound thy creatures.
Teach my endeavors so thy works to read,
That learning them in thee I may proceed.
Give thou my reason that instructive flight,
Whose weary wings may on thy hands still
light.
Teach me to soar aloft, yet ever so,
When near the sun, to stoop again below.
Thus shall my humble feathers safely hover,
And, though near earth, more than the heav'ns
discover.
And then at last, when homeward I shall drive,
Rich with the spoils of nature, to my hive,
There will I sit, like that industrious fly,
Buzzing thy praises; which shall never die
Till death abrupts them, and succeeding glory
Bid me go on in a more lasting story.

And this is almost all wherein an humble creature may endeavor to requite, and some way to retribute unto his Creator: for, if not he that saith, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of the Father, shall be saved, certainly our wills must be our performances, and our intents make out our actions; otherwise our pious labors shall find anxiety in our graves, and our best endeavors not hope, but fear, a resurrection.

SECT. 14. — There is but one first cause, and four second causes of all things. Some are without efficient, as God; others without matter, as angels; some without form, as the first matter: but every essence, created or uncreated, hath its final cause, and some positive end both of its essence and operation. This is the cause I grope after in the works of nature; on this hangs the providence of God. To raise so beauteous a structure as the world and the creatures thereof was but his art; but their sundry and divided operations, with their predestinated ends, are from the treasury of his wisdom. In the causes, nature, and affections, of the eclipses of the sun and moon, there is most excellent speculation; but, to profound farther, and to contemplate a reason why his providence hath so disposed and ordered their motions in that vast circle, as to conjoin and obscure each other, is a sweeter piece of reason, and a diviner point of philosophy. Therefore, sometimes, and in some things, there appears to me as much divinity in Galen's books, *De Usu Partium*,² as in Suarez's³ Metaphysics. Had Aristotle been as curious in the enquiry of this cause as he was of the

other, he had not left behind him an imperfect piece of philosophy, but an absolute tract of divinity.

SECT. 15. — *Natura nihil agit frustra*,¹ is the only indisputable axiom in philosophy. There are no grotesques in nature; not any thing framed to fill up empty cantons, and unnecessary spaces. In the most imperfect creatures, and such as were not preserved in the ark, but, having their seeds and principles in the womb of nature, are every where, where the power of the sun is, — in these is the wisdom of his hand discovered. Out of this rank Solomon chose the object of his admiration; indeed, what reason may not go to school to the wisdom of bees, ants, and spiders? What wise hand teacheth them to do what reason cannot teach us? Ruder heads stand amazed at those prodigious pieces of nature; whales, elephants, dromedaries, and camels; these, I confess, are the colossuses and majestic pieces of her hand; but in these narrow engines there is more curious mathematics; and the civility of these little citizens more neatly sets forth the wisdom of their Maker. Who admires not Regio Montanus² his fly beyond his eagle; or wonders not more at the operation of two souls in those little bodies than but one in the trunk of a cedar? I could never content my contemplation with those general pieces of wonder, the flux and reflux of the sea, the increase of Nile, the conversion of the needle to the north; and have studied to match and parallel those in the more obvious and neglected pieces of nature which, without farther travel, I can do in the cosmography of myself. We carry with us the wonders we seek without us; there is all Africa and her prodigies in us. We are that bold and adventurous piece of nature, which he that studies wisely learns, in a compendium, what others labor at in a divided piece and endless volume.

SECT. 16. — Thus there are two books from whence I collect my divinity: besides that written one of God, another of his servant, nature, that universal and public manuscript, that lies expanded unto the eyes of all. Those that never saw him in the one have discovered him in the other: this was the scripture and theology of the heathens; the natural motion of the sun made them more admire him than its supernatural station did the children of Israel. The ordinary effects of nature wrought more admiration in

¹ Mediæval writer on medicine.

² On the use of parts.

³ A Jesuit religious philosopher.

¹ Nature does nothing in vain.

² A German of Königsberg, 1436-75, who constructed a mechanical fly and an eagle which could soar.

them than, in the other, all his miracles. Surely the heathens knew better how to join and read these mystical letters than we Christians, who cast a more careless eye on these common hieroglyphics, and disdain to suck divinity from the flowers of nature. Nor do I so forget God as to adore the name of nature; which I define not, with the schools, to be the principle of motion and rest, but that straight and regular line, that settled and constant course the wisdom of God hath ordained the actions of his creatures, according to their several kinds. To make a revolution every day is the nature of the sun, because of that necessary course which God hath ordained it, from which it cannot swerve but by a faculty from that voice which first did give it motion. Now this course of nature God seldom alters or perverts; but, like an excellent artist, hath so contrived his work, that, with the self-same instrument, without a new creation, he may effect his obscurest designs. Thus he sweeteneth the water with a wood, preserveth the creatures in the ark, which the blast of his mouth might have as easily created; — for God is like a skilful geometrician, who, when more easily, and with one stroke of his compass, he might describe or divide a right line, had yet rather do this in a circle or longer way, according to the constituted and forelaid principles of his art: yet this rule of his he doth sometimes pervert, to acquaint the world with his prerogative, lest the arrogancy of our reason should question his power, and conclude he could not. And thus I call the effects of nature the works of God, whose hand and instrument she only is; and therefore, to ascribe his actions unto her is to devolve the honor of the principal agent upon the instrument; which if with reason we may do, then let our hammers rise up and boast they have built our houses, and our pens receive the honor of our writings. I hold there is a general beauty in the works of God, and therefore no deformity in any kind of species or creature whatsoever. I cannot tell by what logic we call a toad, a bear, or an elephant ugly; they being created in those outward shapes and figures which best express the actions of their inward forms; and having passed that general visitation of God, who saw that all that he had made was good, that is, conformable to his will, which abhors deformity, and is the rule of order and beauty. There is no deformity but in monstrosity; wherein, notwithstanding, there is a kind of beauty; nature so ingeniously contriving the

irregular parts, as they become sometimes more remarkable than the principal fabric. To speak yet more narrowly, there was never any thing ugly or mis-shapen, but the chaos; wherein, notwithstanding, to speak strictly, there was no deformity, because no form; nor was it yet impregnate by the voice of God. Now nature is not at variance with art, nor art with nature; they being both the servants of his providence. Art is the perfection of nature. Were the world now as it was the sixth day, there were yet a chaos. Nature hath made one world, and art another. In brief, all things are artificial; for nature is the art of God.

SECT. 17. — This is the ordinary and open way of his providence, which art and industry have in good part discovered; whose effects we may foretell without an oracle. To foreshow these is not prophecy, but prognostication. There is another way, full of meanders and labyrinths, whereof the devil and spirits have no exact ephemerides:¹ and that is a more particular and obscure method of his providence; directing the operation of individual and single essences: this we call fortune; that serpentine and crooked line, whereby he draws those actions his wisdom intends in a more unknown and secret way; this cryptic and involved method of his providence have I ever admired; nor can I relate the history of my life, the occurrences of my days, the escapes, or dangers, and hits of chance, with a *bezo las manos*² to Fortune, or a bare gramercy³ to my good stars. Abraham might have thought the ram in the thicket came thither by accident: human reason would have said, that mere chance conveyed Moses in the ark to the sight of Pharaoh's daughter. What a labyrinth is there in the story of Joseph! able to convert a stoic. Surely there are in every man's life certain rubs, doublings, and wrenches, which pass a while under the effects of chance; but at the last, well examined, prove the mere hand of God. 'Twas not dumb chance that, to discover the fougade, or powder plot, contrived a miscarriage in the letter. I like the victory of '88⁴ the better for that one occurrence which our enemies imputed to our dishonor, and the partiality of fortune; to wit, the tempests and contrariety of winds. King Philip did not detract from the nation, when he said, he sent his armada to fight with men, and not to combat with the winds.

1 almanacs.

2 I kiss your hands.

3 many (lit. great) thanks.

4 The defeat of the Spanish Armada.

Where there is a manifest disproportion between the powers and forces of two several agents, upon a maxim of reason we may promise the victory to the superior: but when unexpected accidents slip in, and unthought-of occurrences intervene, these must proceed from a power that owes no obedience to those axioms; where, as in the writing upon the wall, we may behold the hand, but see not the spring that moves it. The success of that petty province of Holland (of which the Grand Seignior¹ proudly said, if they should trouble him, as they did the Spaniard, he would send his men with shovels and pick-axes, and throw it into the sea) I cannot altogether ascribe to the ingenuity and industry of the people, but the mercy of God, that hath disposed them to such a thriving genius; and to the will of his providence, that dispenseth his favor to each country in their preordained season. All cannot be happy at once; for, because the glory of one state depends upon the ruin of another, there is a revolution and vicissitude of their greatness, and must obey the swing of that wheel, not moved by intelligences, but by the hand of God, whereby all estates rise to their zenith and vertical points, according to their predestinated periods. For the lives not only of men, but of commonwealths and the whole world, run not upon a helix² that still enlargeth; but on a circle, where, arriving to their meridian, they decline in obscurity, and fall under the horizon again.

SECT. 18. — These must not therefore be named the effects of fortune but in a relative way, and as we term the works of nature. It was the ignorance of man's reason that begat this very name, and by a careless term mis-called the providence of God: for there is no liberty for causes to operate in a loose and straggling way; nor any effect whatsoever but hath its warrant from some universal or superior cause. 'Tis not a ridiculous devotion to say a prayer before a game at tables; for, even in sortileges³ and matters of greatest uncertainty, there is a settled and pre-ordered course of effects. It is we that are blind, not fortune. Because our eye is too dim to discover the mystery of her effects, we foolishly paint her blind, and hoodwink the providence of the Almighty. I cannot justify that contemptible proverb, that "fools only are fortunate;" or that insolent paradox, that "a wise man is out of the reach of fortune;" much less those opprobrious epithets of poets,

— where, bawd, and strumpet. 'Tis, I confess, the common fate of men of singular gifts of mind, to be destitute of those of fortune; which doth not any way deject the spirit of wiser judgments who thoroughly understand the justice of this proceeding; and, being enriched with higher donatives, cast a more careless eye on these vulgar parts of felicity. It is a most unjust ambition, to desire to engross the mercies of the Almighty, not to be content with the goods of mind, without a possession of those of body or fortune: and it is an error, worse than heresy, to adore these complimentary and circumstantial pieces of felicity, and undervalue those perfections and essential points of happiness, wherein we resemble our Maker. To wiser desires it is satisfaction enough to deserve, though not to enjoy, the favors of fortune. Let providence provide for fools: 'tis not partiality, but equity, in God, who deals with us but as our natural parents. Those that are of able body and mind he leaves to their deserts; to those of weaker merits he imparts a larger portion; and pieces out the defect of one by the excess of the other. Thus have we no just quarrel with nature for leaving us naked; or to envy the horns, hoofs, skins, and furs of other creatures; being provided with reason, that can supply them all. We need not labor, with so many arguments, to confute judicial astrology; for, if there be a truth therein, it doth not injure divinity. If to be born under Mercury disposeth us to be witty; under Jupiter to be wealthy; I do not owe a knee unto these, but unto that merciful hand that hath ordered my indifferent and uncertain nativity into such benevolous aspects. Those that hold, that all things are governed by fortune, had not erred, had they not persisted there. The Romans, that erected a temple to Fortune, acknowledged therein, though in a blinder way, somewhat of divinity; for, in a wise supputation,⁴ all things begin and end in the Almighty. There is a nearer way to heaven than Homer's chain; an easy logic may conjoin a heaven and earth in one argument, and, with less than a sorites,² resolve all things to God. For though we christen effects by their most sensible and nearest causes, yet is God the true and infallible cause of all; whose course, though it be general, yet doth it subdivide itself into the particular actions of every thing, and is that spirit, by which each singular essence not only subsists, but performs its operation.

¹ The Sultan. ² spiral.
³ prophecies by drawing lots.

¹ accounting.

² syllogism.

THOMAS FULLER (1608-1661)

Thomas Fuller was the son of a clergyman, born in 1608. He attended Queen's College, Cambridge, entered the church, and held various livings. He adhered to the king's party in the Civil War, and joined the royal army at Oxford. After the defeat of the King he lived largely by his writings. He died shortly after the restoration of Charles II.

Fuller's writings are voluminous and miscellaneous. He was a favorite preacher, being much reputed for his pithy proverbial expressions and his wit. He compiled a volume of practical ethics called *The Holy State and the Prophan State* (1642) and *The History of the Worthies of England*, which appeared after his death. This is a sort of dictionary of national biography, a survey of England by counties, with brief sketches of the most distinguished representatives of the various professions. Fuller was a great favorite with the critics of the early nineteenth century, Coleridge and Lamb, for his quaintness, his curious turns of mind and style, in which he showed something of the spirit of the "metaphysical poets."

THE LIFE OF SIR FRANCIS
DRAKE

From THE HOLY STATE, BK. II, CH. XXII

Francis Drake was born nigh South Tavi-stock in Devonshire, and brought up in Kent; God dividing the honor betwixt two counties, that the one might have his birth, and the other his education. His father, being a minister, fled into Kent, for fear of the Six Articles, wherein the sting of Popery still remained in England, though the teeth thereof were knocked out, and the Pope's supremacy abolished. Coming into Kent, he bound his son Francis apprentice to the master of a small bark, which traded into France and Zealand, where he underwent a hard service; and pains, with patience in his youth, did knit the joints of his soul, and made them more solid and compacted. His master, dying unmarried, in reward of his industry, bequeathed his bark unto him for a legacy.

For some time he continued his master's profession; but the narrow seas were a prison for so large a spirit, born for greater undertakings. He soon grew weary of his bark; which would scarce go alone, but as it crept along by the shore; wherefore, selling it, he unfortunately ventured most of his estate with Captain John Hawkins into the West Indies, in 1567; whose goods were taken by the Spaniards at St. John de Ulva, and he himself scarce escaped with life: the king of Spain being so tender in those parts, that the least touch doth wound him; and so jealous of the West Indies, his wife, that willingly he would have none look upon her: he therefore used them with the greater severity.

Drake was persuaded by the minister of his ship, that he might lawfully recover in value of the king of Spain, and repair his losses upon him anywhere else. The case

was clear in sea-divinity; and few are such infidels, as not to believe doctrines which make for their own profit. Whereupon Drake, though a poor private man, hereafter undertook to revenge himself on so mighty a monarch; who, as not contented that the sun riseth and setteth in his dominions, may seem to desire to make all his own where he shineth. And now let us see how a dwarf, standing on the mount of God's providence, may prove an overmatch for a giant.

After two or three several voyages to gain intelligence in the West Indies, and some prizes taken, at last he effectually set forward from Plymouth with two ships, the one of seventy, the other twenty-five tons, and seventy-three men and boys in both. He made with all speed and secrecy to Nombre de Dios, as loath to put the town to too much charge (which he knew they would willingly bestow) in providing beforehand for his entertainment; which city was then the granary of the West Indies, wherein the golden harvest brought from Panama was hoarded up till it could be conveyed into Spain. They came hard aboard the shore, and lay quiet all night, intending to attempt the town in the dawning of the day.

But he was forced to alter his resolution, and assault it sooner: for he heard his men muttering amongst themselves of the strength and greatness of the town: and when men's heads are once fly-blown with buzzes of suspicion, the vermin multiply instantly, and one jealousy begets another. Wherefore, he raised them from their nest before they had hatched their fears; and, to put away those conceits, he persuaded them it was day-dawning when the moon rose, and instantly set on the town, and won it, being unwall'd. In the market-place the Spaniards saluted them with a volley of shot; Drake returned their greeting with a flight of arrows, the best and ancient English compliment, which

drave their enemies away. Here Drake received a dangerous wound, though he valiantly concealed it a long time; knowing if his heart stooped, his men's would fall, and loath to leave off the action, wherein if so bright an opportunity once setteth, it seldom riseth again. But at length his men forced him to return to his ship, that his wound might be dressed; and this unhappy accident defeated the whole design. Thus victory sometimes slips through their fingers who have caught it in their hands.

But his valor would not let him give over the project as long as there was either life or warmth in it; and therefore, having received intelligence from the negroes called Symérons of many mules'-lading of gold and silver, which was to be brought from Panama, he, leaving competent numbers to man his ships, went on land with the rest, and bestowed himself in the woods by the way as they were to pass, and so intercepted and carried away an infinite mass of gold. As for the silver, which was not portable over the mountains, they digged holes in the ground and hid it therein.

There want not those who love to beat down the price of every honorable action, though they themselves never mean to be chapmen.¹ These cry up Drake's fortune herein to cry down his valor; as if this his performance were nothing, wherein a golden opportunity ran his head, with his long forelock, into Drake's hands beyond expectation. But, certainly, his resolution and unconquerable patience deserved much praise, to adventure on such a design, which had in it just no more probability than what was enough to keep it from being impossible. Yet I admire not so much at all the treasure he took, as at the rich and deep mine of God's providence.

Having now full freighted himself with wealth, and burnt at the House of Crosses above two hundred thousand pounds' worth of Spanish merchandise, he returned with honor and safety into England, and, some years after (December 13th, 1577) undertook that his famous voyage about the world, most accurately described by our English authors: and yet a word or two thereof will not be amiss.

Setting forward from Plymouth, he bore up for Cabo-verd,² where, near to the island of St. Jago, he took prisoner Nuno de Silva, an experienced Spanish pilot, whose direction he used in the coasts of Brazil and Magellan

Straits, and afterwards safely landed him at Guatulco in New Spain. Hence they took their course to the Island of Brava; and hereabouts they met with those tempestuous winds whose only praise is, that they continue not an hour, in which time they change all the points of the compass. Here they had great plenty of rain, poured (not, as in other places, as it were out of sieves, but) as out of spouts, so that a butt of water falls down in a place; which, notwithstanding, is but a courteous injury in that hot climate far from land, and where otherwise fresh water cannot be provided. Then cutting the Line, they saw the face of that heaven which earth hideth from us, but therein only three stars of the first greatness, the rest few and small compared to our hemisphere; as if God, on purpose, had set up the best and biggest candles in that room wherein his civilest guests are entertained.

Sailing the south of Brazil, he afterwards passed the Magellan Straits (August 20th, 1578) and then entered *Mare Pacificum*, came to the southernmost land at the height of 55½ latitudes; thence directing his course northward, he pillaged many Spanish towns, and took rich prizes of high value in the kingdoms of Chili, Peru, and New Spain. Then, bending eastwards, he coasted China, and the Moluccas, where, by the king of Terrenate, a true gentleman Pagan, he was most honorably entertained. The king told them, they and he were all of one religion in this respect,—that they believed not in gods made of stocks and stones, as did the Portuguese. He furnished them also with all necessaries that they wanted.

On January 9th following (1579), his ship, having a large wind and a smooth sea, ran aground on a dangerous shoal, and struck twice on it; knocking twice at the door of death, which, no doubt, had opened the third time. Here they stuck, from eight o'clock at night till four the next afternoon, having ground too much, and yet too little to land on; and water too much, and yet too little to sail in. Had God (who, as the wise man saith, "holdeth the winds in his fist," Prov. xxx. 4) but opened his little finger, and let out the smallest blast, they had undoubtedly been cast away; but there blew not any wind all the while. Then they, conceiving aright that the best way to lighten the ship was, first, to ease it of the burden of their sins by true repentance, humbled themselves, by fasting, under the hand of God. Afterwards they received the communion,

¹ merchants.

² Cape Verde.

dining on Christ in the sacrament, expecting no other than to sup with him in heaven. Then they cast out of their ship six great pieces of ordnance, threw overboard as much wealth as would break the heart of a miser to think on it, with much sugar, and packs of spices, making a caudle¹ of the sea round about. Then they betook themselves to their prayers, the best lever at such a dead lift indeed; and it pleased God, that the wind, formerly their mortal enemy, became their friend; which, changing from the starboard to the larboard of the ship, and rising by degrees, cleared them off to the sea again, — for which they returned unfeigned thanks to Almighty God.

By the Cape of Good Hope and west of Africa, he returned safe into England, and (November 3rd, 1580) landed at Plymouth (being almost the first of those that made a thorough light through the world), having, in his whole voyage, though a curious searcher after the time, lost one day through the variation of several climates. He feasted the queen in his ship at Dartford, who knighted him for his service. Yet it grieved him not a little, that some prime courtiers refused the gold he offered them, as gotten by piracy. Some of them would have been loath to have been told, that they had *aurum Tholosanum*² in their own purses. Some think, that they did it to show that their envious pride was above their covetousness, who of set purpose did blur the fair copy of his performance, because they would not take pains to write after it.

I pass by his next West-Indian voyage (1585), wherein he took the cities of St. Jago, St. Domingo, Carthagená, and St. Augustine in Florida; as also his service performed in 1588, wherein he, with many others, helped to the waning of that half-moon,³ which sought to govern all the motion of our sea. I haste to his last voyage.

Queen Elizabeth, in 1595, perceiving that the only way to make the Spaniard a cripple forever, was to cut his sinews of war in the West Indies, furnished Sir Francis Drake, and Sir John Hawkins, with six of her own ships, besides twenty-one ships and barks of their own providing, containing in all two thousand five hundred men and boys, for some service on America. But, alas! this voyage was marred before begun. For, so great preparations being too big for a cover, the king of Spain knew of it, and sent a

caraval of adviso⁴ to the West Indies; so that they had intelligence three weeks before the fleet set forth of England, either to fortify or remove their treasure; whereas, in other of Drake's voyages, not two of his own men knew whither he went; and managing such a design is like carrying a mine in war, — if it hath any vent, all is spoiled. Besides, Drake and Hawkins, being in joint commission, hindered each other. The latter took himself to be inferior rather in success than skill; and the action was unlike to prosper when neither would follow, and both could not handsomely go abreast. It vexed old Hawkins, that his counsel was not followed, in present sailing to America, but that they spent time in vain in assaulting the Canaries; and the grief that his advice was slighted, say some, was the cause of his death. Others impute it to the sorrow he took for the taking of his bark called "the Francis," which five Spanish frigates had intercepted. But when the same heart hath two mortal wounds given it together, it is hard to say which of them killeth.

Drake continued his course for Porto Rico; and, riding within the road, a shot from the Castle entered the steerage of the ship, took away the stool from under him as he sat at supper, wounded Sir Nicholas Clifford, and Brute Brown to death. "Ah, dear Brute!" said Drake, "I could grieve for thee, but now is no time for me to let down my spirits." And, indeed, a soldier's most proper bemoaning a friend's death in war, is in revenging it. And, sure, as if grief had made the English furious, they soon after fired five Spanish ships of two hundred tons apiece, in despite of the Castle.

America is not unfitly resembled to an hourglass, which hath a narrow neck of land (suppose it the hole where the sand passeth), betwixt the parts thereof, — Mexicana and Peruana. Now, the English had a design to march by land over this Isthmus, from Porto Rico to Panama, where the Spanish treasure was laid up. Sir Thomas Baskerville, general of the land-forces, undertook the service with seven hundred and fifty armed men. They marched through deep ways, the Spaniards much annoying them with shot out of the woods. One fort in the passage they assaulted in vain, and heard two others were built to stop them, besides Panama itself. They had so much of this breakfast, they thought they should surfeit of a dinner and supper of the same. No hope of conquest,

¹ a warm mixed drink.

² Spanish gold; here, bribes.

³ Spain.

⁴ messengership.

except with cloying the jaws of death, and thrusting men on the mouth of the cannon. Wherefore, fearing to find the proverb true, that "gold may be bought too dear," they returned to their ships. Drake afterwards fired *Nombre de Dios*, and many other petty towns (whose treasure the Spaniards had conveyed away), burning the empty casks, when their precious liquor was run out before, and then prepared for their returning home.

Great was the difference betwixt the Indian cities now, from what they were when Drake first haunted these coasts. At first, the Spaniards here were safe and secure, counting their treasure sufficient to defend itself, the remoteness thereof being the greatest (almost only) resistance, and the fetching of it more than the fighting for it. Whilst the king of Spain guarded the head and heart of his dominions in Europe, he left his long legs in America open to blows: till, finding them to smart, being beaten black and blue by the English, he learned to arm them at last, fortifying the most important of them to make them impregnable.

Now began Sir Francis's discontent to feed upon him. He conceived that expectation, a merciless usurer, computing each day since his departure, exacted all interest and return of honor and profit proportionable to his great preparations, and transcending his former achievements. He saw that all the good which he had done in this voyage consisted in the evil he had done to the Spaniards afar off, whereof he could present but small visible fruits in England. These ap-

prehensions, accompanying, if not causing, the disease of the flux, wrought his sudden death, January 28th, 1595. And sickness did not so much untie his clothes, as sorrow did rend at once the robe of his mortality asunder. He lived by the sea, died on it, and was buried in it. Thus an extempore performance (scarce heard to be begun before we hear it is ended!) comes off with better applause, or miscarries with less disgrace, than a long-studied and openly-premeditated action. Besides, we see how great spirits, having mounted to the highest pitch of performance, afterwards strain and break their credits in striving to go beyond it. Lastly, God oftentimes leaves the brightest men in an eclipse, to show that they do but borrow their luster from his reflexion. We will not justify all the actions of any man, though of a tamer profession than a sea-captain, in whom civility is often counted preciseness. For the main, we say that this our captain was a religious man towards God and his houses (generally sparing churches where he came), chaste in his life, just in his dealings, true of his word, and merciful to those that were under him, hating nothing so much as idleness: and therefore, lest his soul should rust in peace, at spare hours he brought fresh water to Plymouth. Careful he was for posterity (though men of his profession have as well an ebb of riot, as a float of fortune), and providently raised a worshipful family of his kindred. In a word: should those that speak against him fast till they fetch their bread where he did his, they would have a good stomach to eat it.

JEREMY TAYLOR (1613-1667)

Taylor became a preacher shortly after his graduation from Cambridge; was soon appointed chaplain to King Charles I; and after the Restoration was made a bishop. As a clergyman he was noted for his unswerving faith, his gentleness and diligence, and his eloquence. He wrote much prose. Best known of his writings are *Holy Living*, 1650, and *Holy Dying*, 1651.

Taylor is one of the prose stylists of the seventeenth century. His prose is clear and vigorous, scholarly in its references, emotional in its allusions and figures of speech, and always beautiful in cadence.

OF THE SLAVERY AND PAINS ETERNAL¹

The slavery of the damned in hell is such, that all their senses, and powers of soul and body, are subject unto eternal pains and torments; with their touch, they are to serve the burning and never-consuming fire; with

their taste, hunger and thirst; with their smell, stink; with their sight, those horrid and monstrous shapes which the devils shall assume; with their hearing, scorns and affronts; with their imagination, horror; with their will, loathsomeness and detestation; with their memory, despair; with their understanding, confusion; with such a multitude of other punishments, as they shall want eyes to weep for them.

¹ From *Contemplations of the State of Man*, Book II, chapter 7.

Aelian¹ writes of Trizus, the tyrant, that he commanded his subjects not to speak together, and when they used signs, instead of words, he also forbade those; whereupon the afflicted people met in the market-place to at least weep for their misfortunes, but neither was that permitted: greater shall be the rigor in hell, where they shall neither be suffered to speak a word of comfort, nor move hand or foot, nor ease their hearts with weeping. Jeremias the prophet lamented with floods of tears, that Jerusalem, which was the queen of nations, should be made a slave and tributary: what tears are sufficient to lament the damnation of a poor soul who, from an heir and prince of the kingdom of heaven, hath made himself a slave to the devil, and those eternal punishments in hell, unto which he is to pay as many tributes as he hath senses, powers, and members.

As the slaves of the earth are whipped and punished by their masters, so the slaves of hell are tormented by the devils, who have power and dominion over them: children, as slaves, are whipped and chastised by their masters, so the tormentors, making the damned as their slaves, lay upon them a thousand afflictions, griefs, and miseries: every member of their body shall suffer greater pain and torment, than if it were torn from the body. If one cannot tell how to suffer a toothache, headache, or the pain of the cholic, what will it be when there shall not be any joint, or the least part of the body, which shall not cause him an intolerable pain? Not only the head, or teeth, but also the breasts, sides, shoulders, the back, the heart, and all the parts of the body, even to the very bones and marrow. Who can express the number and greatness of their torments, since all their powers and senses, soul and body, are to suffer in a most violent manner? Besides this, every sense from his particular object shall receive a particular punishment.

The eye shall not only be grieved with a scorching heat, but shall be tormented with monstrous and horrible figures: many are affrighted very much, passing through a churchyard, only for fear of seeing a fantasm; in what a fright will be a miserable damned soul, which shall see so many, and of so horrid shapes? Their sight also shall be tormented with beholding the punishment of their friends and kindred. Hegesippus² writes,

that Alexander, the son of Hyrcannus, resolving to punish certain persons with exemplary rigor, caused eight hundred to be crucified; and whilst they were yet alive, caused their wives and children to be murdered before their eyes; that so they might die not once, but many deaths. This rigor shall not be wanting in hell, where fathers shall see their sons, and brothers their brothers, tormented. The torment of the eyes shall be also very great, in regard that those which have given other scandal, and made others fall into sin, shall see themselves, and those others, in that abyss of torments. To the sight of those dreadful apparitions shall be added the horror and fearful darkness of the place.

The darkness of Egypt was said to be horrible, because there the Egyptians beheld fearful figures and fantasm which terrified them. In the like manner, in that infernal darkness, the eyes shall be tormented with the monstrous figures of the wicked spirits, which shall appear much more dreadful, by reason of the obscurity and sadness of that eternal night.

The hearing shall not only be afflicted by an intolerable pain, caused by that ever burning and penetrating fire, but also with the fearful and amazing noises of thunders, howlings, clamors, groans, curses, and blasphemies. Sylla,¹ being dictator, caused six thousand persons to be enclosed in the circus; and then appointing the senate to meet in a temple close by, where he intended to speak unto them about his own affairs, to strike the greater terror into them, and make them know he was their master, he gave order, that, so soon as he began his oration, the soldiers should kill this multitude of people, which was effected: upon which were heard such lamentations, outcries, groans, clashing of armor, and blows of those merciless homicides, that the senators could not hear a word, but stood amazed with terror of so horrid a fact. What shall be the harmony of hell, where the ears shall be deafened with the cries and complaints of the damned? What confusion and horror shall it breed, to hear all lament, all complain, all curse and blaspheme, through the bitterness of the torments which they suffer?

But the damned shall principally be affrighted, and shall quake to hear the thunder-clap of the wrath of God, which shall continually resound in their ears! "Whereas the just," saith the royal prophet, "shall be

¹ A Roman writer of anecdotes, second century A.D.

² Early historian of the Christian Church, second century A.D.

¹ Sulla, dictator of Rome in 82 B.C.

in the eternal memory of God, and shall not fear the dreadful crack of his wrath."

The smell shall also be tormented with a most pestilential stink. Horrible was that torment used by Mezentius,¹ to tie a living body to a dead, and there to leave them, until the infection and putrefied exhalations of the dead had killed the living. What can be more abominable, than for a living man to have his mouth laid close to that of a dead one, full of grubs and worms, where the living must receive all those pestilential vapors, breathed forth from a corrupt carcass, and suffer such loathsomeness and abominable stink? But what is this in respect of hell, when each body of the damned is more loathsome and unsavory than a million of dead dogs, and all those pressed and crowded together in so strait a compass? Bonaventure² goes so far as to say, that if one only of the damned were brought into this world, it were sufficient to infect the whole earth. Neither shall the devils send forth a better smell; for although they are spirits, yet those fiery bodies, unto which they are fastened and confined, shall be of a more pestilential savor.

Hell is the world's sink, and the receptacle of all the filth in this great frame, and withal a deep dungeon, where the air hath no access. How great must the stink and infection needs be of so many corruptions heaped one upon another! and how insufferable the smell of that infernal brimstone, mixed with so many corrupted matters! O gulf of horror! O infernal grave! without vent or breathing place! Eternal grave of such as die continually and cannot die, with what abominable filth art thou not filled!

What shall I then say of the tongue, which is the instrument of so many ways of sinning, flattery, lying, murmuring, and calumniating, gluttony, and drunkenness. Who can express that bitterness, which the damned shall suffer, greater than that of aloes or wormwood? The Scripture tells us, the gall of dragons shall be their wine; and they shall taste the poison of asps for all eternity, unto which shall be joined an intolerable thirst, and doglike hunger: conformable to which David said, "they shall suffer hunger, as dogs." Famine is the most pressing of all necessities, and most deformed of all evils; plagues and wars are happinesses in respect of it. If, then, a famine of eight days be the

worst of temporal evils, what shall that famine be which is eternal? Let our epicures hear what the Son of God prophesies: "Wo unto you who are full;" for you shall be a hungered, and with such a hunger as shall be eternal. Hunger in this life doth bring men to such extremity, that not only they come to desire to eat dogs, cats, rats, and mice, but also mothers come to eat their own children, and men the flesh of their own arms, as it fell out to Zeno¹ the emperor. If hunger be so terrible a mischief in this life, how will it afflict the damned in the other! Without all doubt, the damned would rather tear themselves in pieces than suffer it; all the most horrible famines, that Scripture histories propose unto us, are but weak pictures to that which the damned suffer in this unfortunate residence of eternal miseries; neither shall thirst torment them less.

The sense of touching, as it is the most extended sense of all the rest, so it shall be the most tormented in that burning fire; all the torments which the Scripture doth exhibit to us, as prepared for the reprobate, seem to fall upon this only sense: "They shall pass," saith Job, "from extremity of cold to intolerable heats," whole floods of fire and brimstone, which shower down upon those unfortunate wretches; all this belongs unto the sense of touching. We are amazed to think of the inhumanity of Phalaris,² who roasted men alive in his brazen bull: this was a joy in respect of that fire of hell, which penetrates the very entrails of the body without consuming them. The burning of a finger only does cause so great a torment, that it is insufferable; but far greater were it to burn the whole arm; and far greater were it, besides the arms, to burn the legs; and far more violent torment would it be to burn the whole body. This torment is so great that it cannot be expressed, since it comprises as many torments as the body of man hath joints, sinews, arteries, etc., and especially being caused by that penetrating and real fire, of which this temporal fire is but a painted fire in respect of that in hell.

Amongst all the torments which human justice hath invented for the punishment of crimes, there is none held more rigorous than that of fire, by reason of the great activity of that element. What shall the heat of that fire be, which shall be the executioner of the justice of the God of vengeance! whose zeal

¹ A mythical Etruscan king, whose cruelties were proverbial.

² Noted Italian theologian, 1221-74, who was later canonized.

¹ Emperor of the East, fifth century A.D.

² A cruel tyrant of Sicily in the sixth century B.C., the supposed author of the "epistles of Phalaris," which were shown by Bentley in 1697 to be spurious.

shall be inflamed against the wicked, and shall kindle the fire, which shall eternally burn in the extremities of hell! Such are the torments and miseries of hell, that if all the trees in the world were put in one heap, and set on fire, I would rather burn there till the day of judgment, than suffer, only for the space of one hour, that fire of hell. What a miserable unhappiness will it be to burn in those flames of hell, not only for an hour, but till the day of judgment! yea, even for all eternity, and world without end! Who would not esteem it a hideous torment, if he were to be burnt alive a hundred times, and his torment was to last every time for the space of an hour, with what compassionate eyes would all the world look upon such a miserable wretch! Nevertheless, without all doubt, any of the damned in hell would receive this as a great happiness to end his torments with those hundred times burning: for what comparison is there betwixt a hundred hours burning, with some space of time betwixt every hour, and to burn a hundred years of continual torment! And what comparison will there be betwixt burning for a hundred years' space, and to be burning without interruption, as long as God is God!

Who can express the strange and horrible confusion which shall inhabit the appetite of these wretched creatures? If all the disorders of man's life spring from his passions, what disorder must those miserable souls needs feel in that part, what convulsions, what rage, what fury? Alas! that noble passion, love, the queen of all the rest, the sun of life, that passion which might have made them happy for ever, if they had turned it towards God; that amiable object being razed out of them, the perpetual aversion they have to love shall eternally afflict them, the passion of hatred shall be outrageous in the damned, whence shall proceed their continual blasphemies against God, and the perpetual curses and imprecations which they shall make against the creatures; and if they have any desires, they shall be desirous to see all the world partaker of their pains; their

aversion from all good shall be as much tormenting, as in itself it is execrable: of joy there must no mention be made in that place of dolor; but contrariwise of incredible sadness, which shall oppress them without any consolation. The heat of anger shall redouble the heat of their flames; hope banished from their hearts shall leave the place void to despair, which shall be one of their fiercest tormentors. And though their bodies be within hell's bosom, yet shall they bear about them another hell in their own bosoms.

Consider, now, my soul, whether thou art able to live in this devouring fire, whether thou wilt make choice of thy habitation in eternal flames. This fire is prepared for the devil and his angels; consider whether thou wilt enter in to this cursed crew, and take part of the dregs of their chalice. There is no medium; either thou must forsake thy sins, or else thou must be given up a prey to this eternal torment. I doubt not, thou wilt make a happy choice; and, to escape so dangerous a gulf, cast thy self into the arms of Divine mercy, which only admits the penitent, and say thus: O great God, who art a consuming fire, and makest the fire of thy Divine justice issue from amongst the thorns, to burn the tallest cedars in Lebanon; let the fire, which walks before thee as executioner of justice, never depart from our memory; may it be unto us a pillar of light in the darkness of our errors, a lamp unto our feet, and a lantern to our ways, whereby we may discover this infernal gulf, which is ready to swallow us up. Thou, O Lord, who didst deliver the three children out of the Babylonian furnace, preserve us from those eternal flames, and exempt us from the burning ones of thy wrath; place us in the light and bright one of thy love, where, like Pyratides¹ and sacred Salamanders,² we shall live happy, without pain and torment, singing honor, praise, and benediction unto thee, our God, for ever and ever. Amen.

¹ children of fire.

² The Salamander was supposed, erroneously, to be able to live in fire. In certain mediæval cults a soul that could endure fire was called a Salamander.

ABRAHAM COWLEY (1618-1667)

Cowley is remembered for his Pindaric odes, his light lyrics, especially those after the manner of the Greek poet Anacreon, and his prose essays. Shortly after his graduation from Cambridge, he joined the Royalist side in the Civil War, spending a dozen years in France during the Commonwealth in the employ of the Queen. At the Restoration he received as a reward a small country estate, where he spent the remainder of his life. Although an avowed disciple of Spenser, much of Cowley's verse is typical of the century in its metaphysical character, — often sparkling, but

sometimes forced. During his life he enjoyed a high reputation as a writer and as a scholar. Among his honors was the presidency of the Royal Society. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, near his master, Spenser.

OF MYSELF

It is a hard and nice ¹ subject for a man to write of himself; it grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement and the reader's ears to hear anything of praise for him. There is no danger from me of offending him in this kind; neither my mind, nor my body, nor my fortune allow me any materials for that vanity. It is sufficient for my own contentment that they have preserved me from being scandalous, or remarkable on the defective side. But besides that, I shall here speak of myself only in relation to the subject of these precedent discourses, and shall be likelier thereby to fall into the contempt than rise up to the estimation of most people. As far as my memory can return back into my past life, before I knew or was capable of guessing what the world, or glories, or business of it were, the natural affections of my soul gave a secret bent of aversion from them, as some plants are said to turn away from others, by an antipathy imperceptible to themselves and inscrutable to man's understanding. Even when I was a very young boy at school, instead of running about on holidays, and playing with my fellows, I was wont to steal from them and walk into the fields, either alone with a book, or with some one companion, if I could find any of the same temper. I was then, too, so much an enemy to constraint, that my masters could never prevail on me, by any persuasions or encouragements, to learn without book the common rules of grammar, in which they dispensed with me alone, because they found I made a shift to do the usual exercises out of my own reading and observation. That I was then of the same mind as I am now — which, I confess, I wonder at myself — may appear at the latter end of an ode which I made when I was but thirteen years old, and which was then printed with many other verses. The beginning of it is boyish; but of this part which I here set down, if a very little were corrected, I should hardly now be much ashamed.

9

This only grant me, that my means may lie
Too low for envy, for contempt too high.
Some honor I would have,

1 delicate.

Not from great deeds, but good alone.
Th' unknown are better than ill-known.

Rumor can ope the grave;
Acquaintance I would have; but when 't
depends

5 Not on the number, but the choice of friends.

10

Books should, not business, entertain the light,
And sleep, as undisturbed as death, the night.

My house a cottage, more
Than palace, and should fitting be
For all my use, no luxury.

My garden painted o'er
With Nature's hand, not Art's; and pleasures
yield,
15 Horace might envy in his Sabine ¹ field.

11

Thus would I double my life's fading space,
For he that runs it well, twice runs his race.

And in this true delight,
20 These unbought sports, that happy state,
I would not fear nor wish my fate,

But boldly say each night,
To-morrow let my sun his beams display,
Or in clouds hide them; I have lived to-day.

25 You may see by it I was even then acquainted with the poets, (for the conclusion is taken out of Horace); and perhaps it was the immature and immoderate love of them which stamped first, or rather engraved, the characters in me. They were like letters cut into the bark of a young tree, which, with the tree, still grow proportionably. But how this love came to be produced in me so early is a hard question. I believe I can tell the particular little chance that filled my head first with such chimes of verse, as have never since left ringing there; for I remember when I began to read, and take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlor — I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion — but there was wont to lie Spenser's works; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, and giants, and monsters, and brave houses, which I found everywhere there — though my understanding had little to do with all this — and by degrees, with the tinkling of the rhyme, and dance of the numbers; so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was

¹ The country place of the Roman poet Horace, given to him, about 33 B.C., by his patron Mæcenās.

thus made a poet as immediately as a child is made an eunuch. With these affections of mind, and my heart wholly set upon letters, I went to the university, but was soon torn from thence by that violent public storm¹ which would suffer nothing to stand where it did, but rooted up every plant, even from the princely cedars, to me, the hyssop.² Yet I had as good fortune as could have befallen me in such a tempest; for I was cast by it into the family of one³ of the best persons, and into the court of one of the best princesses⁴ of the world. Now, though I was here engaged in ways most contrary to the original design of my life, that is, into much company, and no small business, and into a daily sight of greatness, both militant and triumphant — for that was the state then of the English and the French courts — yet all this was so far from altering my opinion, that it only added the confirmation of reason to that which was before but natural inclination. I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life, the nearer I came to it; and that beauty which I did not fall in love with, when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me when I saw it was adulterate. I met with several great persons, whom I liked very well, but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired, no more than I would be glad or content to be in a storm, though I saw many ships which rid safely and bravely in it. A storm would not agree with my stomach, if it did with my courage. Though I was in a crowd of as good company as could be found anywhere, though I was in business of great and honorable trust, though I eat at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences for present subsistence that ought to be desired by a man of my condition, in banishment and public distresses, yet I could not abstain from renewing my old school-boy's wish in a copy of verses to the same effect:

Well then. I now do plainly see
This busy world and I shall ne'er agree, etc.

And I never then proposed to myself any other advantage from his majesty's happy restoration, but the getting into some mod-

¹ The civil war of 1642.
² A small plant; the comparison here between the cedar and the hyssop is from 1 Kings iv, 33.

³ William Hervey, whose brother John (later Earl of St. Albans) was the confidant of Charles I's queen, Henrietta Maria. On the death of William Hervey, Cowley wrote a sincere elegy, which may be found in *Palgrave's Golden Treasury*.

⁴ Queen Henrietta Maria, whose secretary Cowley was after her flight to France.

erately convenient retreat in the country, which I thought in that case I might easily have compassed, as well as some others, who, with no greater probabilities or pretences, have arrived to extraordinary fortunes. But I had before written a shrewd prophecy against myself, and I think Apollo inspired me in the truth, though not in the elegance of it:

Thou neither great at court, nor in the war,
Nor at the Exchange shalt be, nor at the wrangling bar;
Content thyself with the small barren praise
Which thy neglected verse does raise, etc.

However, by the failing of the forces which I had expected, I did not quit the design which I had resolved on; I cast myself into it a *corpus perditum*,¹ without making capitulations, or taking counsel of fortune. But God laughs at a man who says to his soul, Take thy ease. I met presently not only with many little incumbrances and impediments, but with so much sickness — a new misfortune to me — as would have spoiled the happiness of an emperor as well as mine. Yet I do neither repent nor alter my course: *Non ego perfidum dixi sacramentum*.² Nothing shall separate me from a mistress which I have loved so long, and have now at last married, though she neither has brought me a rich portion, nor lived yet so quietly with me as I hoped from her.

— *Nec vos dulcissima mundi
Nomina, vos musæ, libertas, otia, libri,
Hortique, sylvæque, anima remanente relinquam.*

Nor by me e'er shall you,
You of all names the sweetest and the best,
You muses, books, and liberty, and rest;
You gardens, fields, and woods forsaken be,
As long as life itself forsakes not me.³

ANACREONTICS

I. DRINKING

The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,
And drinks and gapes for drink again;
The plants suck in the earth, and are
With constant drinking fresh and fair;
The sea itself (which one would think
Should have but little need of drink)
Drinks twice ten thousand rivers up,
So filled that they o'erflow the cup.

¹ lost body.

² I have not sworn a false oath.

³ Cowley concludes the essay with two translations from Martial.

The busy Sun (and one would guess
 By's drunken fiery face no less) 10
 Drinks up the sea, and when he's done,
 The Moon and Stars drink up the Sun:
 They drink and dance by their own light,
 They drink and revel all the night:
 Nothing in Nature's sober found, 15
 But an eternal health goes round.
 Fill up the bowl, then, fill it high,
 Fill all the glasses there — for why
 Should every creature drink but I?
 Why, man of morals, tell me why? 20

2. THE EPICURE

Underneath this myrtle shade,
 On flowery beds supinely laid,
 With odorous oils my head o'erflowing,
 And around it roses growing,
 What should I do but drink away 5
 The heat and troubles of the day?
 In this more than kingly state
 Love himself on me shall wait.
 Fill to me, Love! nay, fill it up!
 And mingled cast into the cup 10
 Wit and mirth and noble fires,
 Vigorous health and gay desires.
 The wheel of life no less will stay
 In a smooth than rugged way:
 Since it equally doth flee, 15
 Let the motion pleasant be.
 Why do we precious ointments shower? —
 Nobler wines why do we pour? —
 Beauteous flowers why do we spread
 Upon the monuments of the dead? 20
 Nothing they but dust can show,
 Of bones that hasten to be so.
 Crown me with roses while I live,
 Now your wines and ointments give;
 After death I nothing crave, 25
 Let me alive my pleasures have:
 All are Stoics in the grave.

THE WISH

Well then! I now do plainly see
 This busy world and I shall ne'er agree.¹
 The very honey of all earthly joy
 Does of all meats the soonest cloy;
 And they, methinks, deserve my pity 5
 Who for it can endure the stings,
 The crowd and buzz and murmurings,
 Of this great hive, the city.

Ah, yet, ere I descend to the grave
 May I a small house and large garden 10
 have;

1 Cf. Cowley's essay, *Of Myself*.

And a few friends, and many books, both
 true,
 Both wise, and both delightful too!
 And since love ne'er will from me flee,
 A Mistress moderately fair,
 And good as guardian angels are, 15
 Only beloved and loving me.

O fountains! when in you shall I
 Myself eased of unpeaceful thoughts espy?
 O fields! O woods! when, when shall I be
 made
 The happy tenant of your shade? 20
 Here's the spring-head of Pleasure's
 flood;
 Here's wealthy Nature's treasury,
 Where all the riches lie that she
 Has coined and stamped for good.

Pride and ambition here 25
 Only in far-fetched metaphors appear;
 Here nought but winds can hurtful murmurs
 scatter,
 And nought but Echo flatter. 10
 The gods, when they descended, hither
 From heaven did always choose their way; 30
 And therefore we may boldly say
 That 'tis the way too thither.

How happy here should I
 And one dear She live, and embracing die!
 She who is all the world, and can exclude 35
 In deserts solitude.

I should have then this only fear:
 Lest men, when they my pleasures see,
 Should hither throng to live like me,
 And so make a city here. 40

THE THIEF

Thou robbest my days of business and de-
 lights,
 Of sleep thou robbest my nights;
 Ah, lovely thief, what wilt thou do?
 What, rob me of Heaven too?
 Thou even my prayers dost steal from 5
 me,
 And I, with wild idolatry,
 Begin to God, and end them all to thee.

Is it a sin to love, that it should thus
 Like an ill conscience, torture us?
 What'er I do, where e'er I go, 10
 (None guiltless e'er was haunted so)
 Still, still, methinks thy face I view,
 And still thy shape does me pursue,
 As if not you me, but I had murdered you.

From books I strive some remedy to take, 15
 But thy name all the letters make;
 Whate'er 'tis writ, I find that there,
 Like points and commas everywhere.
 Me blest for this let no man hold;
 For I, as Midas did of old, 20
 Perish by turning everything to gold.

What do I seek, alas, or why do I
 Attempt in vain from thee to fly?
 For making thee my deity
 I give thee then ubiquity. 25
 My pains resemble hell in this:
 The divine presence there too is,
 But to torment men, not to give them bliss.

A SUPPLICATION

Awake, awake, my Lyre!
 And tell thy silent master's humble tale
 In sounds that may prevail;
 Sounds that gentle thoughts inspire:
 Though so exalted she 5
 And I so lowly be
 Tell her, such different notes make all thy
 harmony.

Hark, how the strings awake!
 And, though the moving hand approach not
 near,
 Themselves with awful fear 10
 A kind of numerous¹ trembling make.
 Now all thy forces try;
 Now all thy charms apply;
 Revenge upon her ear the conquests of her eye.

Weak Lyre! thy virtue sure 15
 Is useless here, since thou art only found
 To cure, but not to wound,
 And she to wound, but not to cure.
 Too weak too, wilt thou prove
 My passion to remove; 20
 Physic to other ills, thou'rt nourishment to
 Love.

Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre!
 For thou canst never tell my humble tale
 In sounds that will prevail,
 Nor gentle thoughts in her inspire; 25
 All thy vain mirth lay by,
 Bid thy strings silent lie,
 Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre, and let thy
 master die.

¹ metrical.

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

John Milton was born in London December 9, 1608. His father was a scrivener, or drawer of legal documents, who had broken off relations with his family, which was Roman Catholic, in order to follow the Puritan faith. He was a man of culture, and a musician of some note. John Milton was sent to Saint Paul's School and later to Christ's College, Cambridge, where he made his mark as a scholar, though he found the academic routine distasteful. His father had purchased a small estate in the country, at Horton, where Milton spent some five years after his departure from Cambridge, 1632 to 1637, reading the classics and writing poetry. In 1638 he went to Italy. The Italian poetry of the early Renaissance which had been such an inspiration to Chaucer had become conventional and stereotyped, practiced by poets who associated themselves in circles or academies, for purposes of literary competition. Milton enjoyed the elegance and culture which he found in Italy, but he recognized the lack of freedom of thought under the tyranny of Spain and the Church. When he learned that his own countrymen were engaged in a struggle to preserve their own liberties against Charles I, he "thought it shame" to be absent, and returned to England in 1639.

For the next eighteen years Milton was absorbed in the political movements of the time. He was a zealous opponent of the Established Church and the King. He became Latin Secretary to the Council of State and wrote much in defense of the revolution and execution of the King. It was in consequence of these labors that his eyesight, which had always been weak, failed totally. Before this, in 1643, Milton had married Mary Powell, daughter of a Cavalier family. She left him shortly after the marriage, but returned to him in 1645, and bore him three daughters. After her death he married Katharine Woodcock in 1656, who died a year later. His third wife was Elizabeth Minshull. After the restoration of Charles II, Milton was in some personal danger and had to go into hiding, but he was relieved by the act of oblivion and resumed work on his greater poems, which occupied him until shortly before his death in 1674.

Milton was born when the mood of appreciation of the experience of the present world which was characteristic of the Renaissance was yielding to that interest in the other world which was the essence of Puritanism. Nevertheless, the London which he knew as a boy was the London of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. The letters and elegies which he wrote in Latin contain ample evidence of his delight in music, the stage, and in the beauty of women. Yet this urge of the Renaissance was restrained by a Puritan sense of the meaning of life. He early felt himself called to

be a poet, "to leave something so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die." How seriously he took this vocation is shown by his sonnet *On Reaching the Age of Twenty-Three*. His first considerable poem was the *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1629). There followed the two poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, inspired by his early residence at Horton. While there, at the instance of his friend Henry Lawes, the chief musical composer of the day, he wrote the pastoral play, *Comus*, and just before his departure for Italy, the elegy on the death of a college friend, which he called *Lycidas*. When Milton returned from Italy, he found Parliament entering on the long contest with Charles I which culminated in the Civil War. The first phase of the struggle which interested him was the issue of freedom of worship from the authority of the Established Church. Later he became concerned with the problem of individual liberty in relation to the necessary control of the State. His desertion by his first wife led him to write several pamphlets on the right of divorce, and the magnificent plea for freedom of speech called *Areopagitica*. In opposition to the doctrine of divine right, he defended the right of the people to put to death a king who oppressed them, in his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*; and against the hostile criticism of scholars and publicists on the Continent he wrote in Latin his *First Defense of the People of England*, followed by the *Second Defense*. All this, however, was apart from the serious vocation as poet. This he resumed when his blindness gave him some release from the cares of office. *Paradise Lost* was published in 1663. A kindred theme, the story of Christ's temptation, he dealt with in *Paradise Regained*. His last poem was a tragedy on the Greek model, *Samson Agonistes*, based on the story of Samson's destruction of the Philistine temple of Dagon.

Milton's poetry is edited by David Masson in three volumes. A single-volume edition is that edited by W. V. Moody (Cambridge Poets). Milton's prose works are collected in the Bohn Library. Annotated editions of the *Areopagitica* are those by J. W. Hales (Clarendon Press) and Laura E. Lockwood in the Riverside Literature Series.

The chief life of Milton is that by David Masson in seven volumes. Single-volume lives are those by Mark Pattison in the English Men of Letters Series and by Richard Garnett in the Great Writers Series. The famous Essay on Milton by Lord Macaulay appears on page 1002 of the present work. Other essays are those by W. Bagehot, J. R. Lowell, G. E. Woodbury, etc. An important study is Denis Saurat's *Milton, Man and Thinker*. James Holly Hanford's *A Milton Handbook* is useful.

L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO

1631-1633

These poems were written at Horton, either during a vacation in 1631, or after Milton had taken up his residence there in July, 1632. They are companion pieces, *The Joyous Man* and *The Thoughtful Man*, written to emphasize two attitudes toward life, the cheerful and social, and the thoughtful and solitary. It is certain that Milton in his own experience comprehended both the frank delight in the sensations of the present, which was of the Renaissance; and the serious contemplation of man's place in the world, which was enforced by Puritanism. The poems are examples of Milton's classic sense of form, the central theme in each case strictly controlling the detail abundantly offered in its illustration. They are classic in another respect, in the choice of language fitted to the thought with a perfection that is beyond praise.

L'ALLEGRO

Hence, loathèd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and
sights unholy,
Find out some uncouth ¹ cell, 5
¹ unknown.

Where brooding Darkness spreads his
jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There under ebon shades, and low-browed
rocks,

As ragged ² as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ² ever dwell. 10
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven ycleped Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus at a birth
With two sister Graces more 15
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore;
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic Wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying, 20
There on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew.
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.

Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee ²⁵
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips, and Cranks,³ and wanton Wiles,
Nods, and Becks, and wreathèd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek; 30

¹ rugged.

² Known to the Homeric Greeks as a land of mist and darkness.

³ windings.

Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
 And Laughter holding both his sides.
 Come, and trip it as ye go,
 On the light fantastic toe;
 And in thy right hand lead with thee 35
 The mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty;
 And, if I give thee honor due,
 Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
 To live with her, and live with thee,
 In unproved ¹ pleasures free;
 To hear the lark begin his flight,
 And singing startle the dull night,
 From his watch-tower in the skies,
 Till the dappled Dawn doth rise;
 Then to come, in spite of sorrow,²
 And at my window bid good-morrow,
 Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
 Or the twisted eglantine;
 While the cock with lively din
 Scatters the rear of Darkness thin;
 And to the stack, or the barn-door,
 Stoutly struts his dames before:
 Oft listening how the hounds and horn
 Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn,
 From the side of some hoar³ hill,
 Through the high wood echoing shrill:
 Sometime walking, not unseen,
 By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
 Right against the eastern gate,
 Where the great Sun begins his state,⁴
 Robed in flames and amber light,
 The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
 While the ploughman, near at hand,
 Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
 And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
 And the mower whets his scythe,
 And every shepherd tells his tale⁵
 Under the hawthorn in the dale.

Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,

Whilst the landscape round it measures: 70
 Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
 Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
 Mountains on whose barren breast
 The laboring clouds do often rest;
 Meadows trim with daisies pied;
 Shallow brooks, and rivers wide. 75
 Towers and battlements it sees
 Bosomed high in tufted trees,
 Where perhaps some Beauty lies,
 The Cynosure⁶ of neighboring eyes. 80
 Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
 From betwixt two aged oaks,

Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
 Are at their savory dinner set
 Of herbs and other country messes, 85
 Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
 And then in haste her bower she leaves,
 With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
 Or, if the earlier season lead,
 To the tanned haycock in the mead. 90
 Sometimes with secure ¹ delight
 The upland hamlets will invite,
 When the merry bells ring round,
 And the jocund rebecks² sound
 To many a youth and many a maid 95
 Dancing in the chequered shade;
 And young and old come forth to play
 On a sunshine holiday,
 Till the livelong daylight fail:
 Then to the spicy nut-brown ale, 100
 With stories told of many a feat,
 How fairy Mab³ the junkets eat:
 She was pinched and pulled, she said;
 And he, by Friar's⁴ lantern led,
 Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat 105
 To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
 When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
 His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
 That ten day-laborers could not end;
 Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,⁵ 110
 And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
 Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
 And crop-full out of doors he flings,
 Ere the first cock his matin rings.
 Thus done the tales, to bed they creep, 115
 By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
 Towered cities please us then,
 And the busy hum of men,
 Where throngs of Knights and Barons
 bold,
 In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold, 120
 With store of Ladies, whose bright eyes
 Rain influence, and judge the prize
 Of wit or arms, while both contend
 To win her grace whom all commend.
 There let Hymen oft appear 125
 In saffron robe, with taper clear,
 And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
 With mask and antique pageantry;
 Such sights as youthful Poets dream
 On summer eves by haunted stream. 130
 Then to the well-trod stage anon,
 If Jonson's learned sock⁶ be on,

¹ carefree.

² early type of fiddle.

³ The fairy Mab concerned herself with servant girls either as their benevolent patroness or evil genius.

⁴ Friar Rush, sometimes called Jack-a-lantern, and Robin Good-fellow performed similar offices toward farm-laborers.

⁵ Lob-lie-by-the-fire.

⁶ Implying comedy. Comic actors wore the *soccus*, a low slipper. Tragic actors wore the *cothurnus*, a high boot, or buskin.

¹ innocent. ² in order to spite sorrow.

³ white with frost in autumn, the hunting season.

⁴ royal progress. ⁵ counts his flock.

⁶ In astronomy, the constellation of the Lesser Bear, containing the Pole Star, by which the Tyrian sailors steered their course.

Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
 Warble his native wood-notes wild.
 And ever, against eating cares, 135
 Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
 Married to immortal verse,
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
 In notes with many a winding bout¹
 Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out 140
 With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
 The melting voice through mazes running,
 Untwisting all the chains that tie
 The hidden soul of harmony;
 That Orpheus' self may heave his head 145
 From golden slumber on a bed
 Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
 Such strains as would have won the ear
 Of Pluto to have quite set free
 His half-regained Eurydice. 150
 These delights if thou canst give,
 Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENNEROSO

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
 The brood of Folly without father bred!
 How little you bested,²
 Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
 Dwell in some idle brain, 5
 And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
 As thick and numberless
 As the gay motes that people the sun-
 beams,
 Or likest hovering dreams,
 The fickle pensioners³ of Morpheus'
 train. 10
 But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
 Hail, divinest Melancholy!
 Whose saintly visage is too bright
 To hit the sense of human sight,
 And therefore to our weaker view 15
 O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
 Black, but such as in esteem
 Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,⁴
 Or that starred Ethiop Queen⁵ that strove
 To set her beauty's praise above 20
 The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
 Yet thou art higher far descended:
 Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
 To solitary Saturn bore;
 His daughter she; in Saturn's reign 25
 Such mixture was not held a stain.

Of in glimmering bowers and glades
 He met her, and in secret shades
 Of woody Ida's¹ inmost grove,
 Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove. 30
 Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
 Sober, steadfast, and demure,
 All in a robe of darkest grain,
 Flowing with majestic train,
 And sable stole of cypress lawn 35
 Over thy decent² shoulders drawn.
 Come; but keep thy wonted state,
 With even step, and musing gait,
 And looks commercing with the skies,
 Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes: 40
 There, held in holy passion still,
 Forget thyself to marble, till
 With a sad³ leaden downward cast
 Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
 And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet, 45
 Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
 And hears the Muses in a ring
 Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
 And add to these retirèd Leisure,
 That in trim gardens takes his pleasure; 50
 But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
 Him that yon soars on golden wing,
 Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
 The Cherub Contemplation;
 And the mute Silence hist along,⁴ 55
 'Less Philomel will deign a song,
 In her sweetest saddest plight,
 Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
 While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke⁵
 Gently o'er the accustomed oak. 60
 Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
 Most musical, most melancholy!
 Thee, Chauntress, oft the woods among
 I woo, to hear thy even-song;
 And, missing thee, I walk unseen⁶ 65
 On the dry smooth-shaven green,
 To behold the wandering Moon,
 Riding near her highest noon,
 Like one that had been led astray
 Through the heaven's wide pathless way, 70
 And oft, as if her head she bowed,
 Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
 Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
 I hear the far-off curfew sound,
 Over some wide-watered shore, 75
 Swinging slow with sullen roar;
 Or, if the air will not permit,
 Some still removed place will fit,

¹ turn, or involution. ² benefit.

³ Queen Elizabeth's body guards, noblemen picked for their wealth, and personal beauty, were known as her "pensioners."

⁴ Prince Memnon was of traditional beauty. The suggestion is that this is also an attribute of his sister, although no such person exists in legend.

⁵ Cassiopeia.

¹ Mount Ida, in Crete, the home of the Muses, where the infant Jove was nurtured.

² comely. ³ sober.

⁴ bring along with finger on lip, saying hist!

⁵ Mythology attributes the dragon team not to the moon but to Ceres.

⁶ Supposedly, the nightingale does not sing after the grass is mown; hence, "missing thee."

Where glowing embers through the room
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom, 80
 Far from all resort of mirth,
 Save the cricket on the hearth,
 Or the Bellman's drowsy charm
 To bless the doors from nightly harm.
 Or let my lamp, at midnight hour, 85
 Be seen in some high lonely tower,
 Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,¹
 With thrice-great Hermes,² or unsphere
 The spirit of Plato, to unfold
 What worlds or what vast regions hold 90
 The immortal mind that hath forsook
 Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
 And of those demons that are found
 In fire, air, flood, or underground,
 Whose power hath a true consent 95
 With planet or with element.
 Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
 In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
 Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,³
 Or the tale of Troy divine, 100
 Or what (though rare) of later age
 Ennobled hath the buskined ⁴ stage.
 But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
 Might raise Musæus ⁵ from his bower;
 Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing 105
 Such notes as, warbled to the string,
 Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
 And made Hell grant what Love did seek;
 Or call up him that left half-told
 The story of Cambuscan bold, 110
 Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
 And who had Canace to wife,
 That owned the virtuous ⁷ ring and glass,
 And of the wondrous horse of brass
 On which the Tartar King did ride; 115
 And if aught else great Bards beside
 In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
 Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
 Of forests, and enchantments drear,
 Where more is meant than meets the ear. 120
 Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
 Till civil-suited ⁸ Morn appear,
 Not tricked and frownced, as she was wont
 With the Attic boy ⁹ to hunt,
 But kerchieft in a comely cloud, 125
 While rocking winds are piping loud,

¹ Watch until dawn, as the constellation of the Bear does not set.

² Hermes Trismegistus, a mythical philosopher and magician. ³ During the middle ages his name was used as a signature to various books on mysticism and magic.

⁴ The *Seven against Thebes*, of Æschylus, the *Œdipus Tyrannus* and *Antigone* of Sophocles, the *Electra*, and the *Iphigenia* of Euripides, deal with these subjects.

⁵ Cf. *L'Allegro*, line 132.

⁶ Like Orpheus, a mythical Greek poet.

⁷ Chaucer's Squire's Tale, in which Camball, Algarsife, and Canace are personages.

⁸ With magic power.

⁹ soberly dressed.

⁹ Cephalus.

Or ushered with a shower still,
 When the gust hath blown his fill,
 Ending on the rustling leaves,
 With minute-drops from off the eaves. 130
 And, when the sun begins to fling
 His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
 To archèd walks of twilight groves,
 And shadows brown, that Sylvan ¹ loves,
 Of pine, or monumental oak, 135
 Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
 Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
 Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
 There, in close covert, by some brook,
 Where no profaner eye may look, 140
 Hide me from Day's garish eye,
 While the bee with honeyed thigh,
 That at her flowery work doth sing,
 And the waters murmuring,
 With such consort as they keep, 145
 Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
 And let some strange mysterious dream
 Wave at his wings, in airy stream
 Of lively portraiture displayed,
 Softly on my eyelids laid. 150
 And as I wake, sweet music breathe
 Above, about, or underneath,
 Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
 Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
 But let my due feet never fail 155
 To walk the studious cloister's pale,²
 And love the high embowèd roof,
 With antique pillars massy proof,
 And storied windows richly dight,
 Casting a dim religious light. 160
 There let the pealing organ blow,
 To the full voiced Quire below,
 In service high and anthems clear,
 As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
 Dissolve me into ecstasies, 165
 And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
 And may at last my weary age
 Find out the peaceful hermitage,
 The hairy gown and mossy cell,
 Where I may sit and rightly spell 170
 Of every star that Heaven doth shew,
 And every herb that sips the dew;
 Till old experience do attain
 To something like prophetic strain.
 These pleasures, Melancholy, give, 175
 And I with thee will choose to live.

LYCIDAS

1637

L'Allegro and *Il Penseroso* mark the beginning of the period of quiet enjoyment and study which made up Milton's life at Horton. *Lyci-*

¹ Sylvanus, the god of woods.

² enclosure.

das represents the deepening seriousness of its close. The occasion of the poem was the death of Edward King, a fellow student of Milton's at Cambridge, by drowning in the Irish Sea. It was a contribution to a memorial volume made up by his friends in 1637. It is in a form which was much in fashion among poets of the Renaissance — that of the pastoral elegy. Historically this form goes back to Theocritus and the Greek poets of Alexandria, who made the rude songs of shepherds and goatherds, sung in competition for a prize, in lamentation for disappointment in love or as a dirge over a dead comrade, the conventional basis for more artificial compositions. Spenser had given examples of various kinds of pastoral poetry in his *Shepherd's Calendar*. Now Milton adopted the elegy as the expression of grief for a young and promising friend, who as a clergyman might not unfittingly be described as a shepherd. Like Spenser, Milton introduced into his poem certain reflections on matters of current interest, particularly the arrogance of the Established church which was soon to lead to civil war between Parliament and the King. Although *Lycidas* follows a model inherited from classical literature, it is much less classical in style than the preceding poems — less restrained and chiselled, more emotional, decorated, eloquent, approaching the sublime. Especially in lines 155–163 in which he makes use of the romantic appeal of remote places he anticipates the rhetorical splendor of the great passages in *Paradise Lost*.

Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more,

Ye Myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year. ⁵

Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well ¹ 15
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth
spring;

Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse ²

¹ The nine muses of Greek mythology, to whom the fountain of Aganippe, on Mt. Helicon, where there was also an altar dedicated to Jove, was sacred. Making the source of the spring from beneath the altar was original with Milton.

² poet.

With lucky ¹ words favour my destined
urn, ²⁰

And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!

For we were nursed upon the self-same
hill,

Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and
rill;

Together both, ere the high lawns ap-
peared ²⁵

Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry
horn,

Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of
night,

Oft till the star that rose at evening bright ³⁰
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his
westerling wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;

Tempered ² to the oaten flute

Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven
heel

From the glad sound would not be absent
long; ³⁵

And old Damoetas ³ loved to hear our song.

But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art
gone,

Now thou art gone and never must return!

Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert
caves,

With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'er-
grown, ⁴⁰

And all their echoes, mourn.

The willows, and the hazel copses green,

Shall now no more be seen

Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.

As killing as the canker to the rose, ⁴⁵

Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that
graze,

Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe
wear,

When first the white-thorn blows;

Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the re-
morseless deep ⁵⁰

Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?

For neither were ye playing on the steep ⁴

Where your old Bards, the famous Druids,
lie,

Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,

¹ auspicious. ² in tune with.

³ Perhaps a reference to William Chappell, Milton's tutor at Cambridge.

⁴ Possibly the Druid sepulchers at Kerig y Druidion in Denbighshire, a possible haunt of the Muses. *Mona*, the island of Anglesey, is now treeless, but was evidently wooded in Milton's time. *Deva*, or the Dee, is a "wizard stream," because of a tradition that the shifting of its channel portended good fortune for the side toward which it tended.

Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard
stream. 55
Ay me! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there," . . . for what could
that have done?
What could the Muse¹ herself that Orpheus
bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament, 60
When, by the rout that made the hideous
roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, Shepherd's
trade, 65
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear² spirit doth
raise 70
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury³ with the abhorred
shears, 75
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the
praise,"
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling
ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal
soil,
Nor in the glistening foil⁴
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor
lies, 80
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure
eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy
meed."
O fountain Arethuse,⁵ and thou honored
flood, 85
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal
reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea,⁶
That came in Neptune's plea. 90

He asked the waves, and asked the felon
winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle
swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakèd promon-
tory.
They knew not of his story; 95
And sage Hippotades¹ their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon
strayed:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope² with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark, 100
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses
dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus,³ reverend Sire, went footing
slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the
edge 105
Like to that sanguine flower⁴ inscribed with
woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest
pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;⁵
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain 110
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern be-
spoke:—
"How well could I have spared for thee,
young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the
fold! 115
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know
how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the
least 120
That to the faithful Herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they?
They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy⁶
songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched
straw;

¹ Calliope, mother of Orpheus. ² untainted.

³ Atropos, one of the Fates, usually represented as blind.

⁴ Referring to the use of gold or silver leaf to set off a jewel.

⁵ The Fountain Arethuse, in Sicily, represents pastoral poetry, as does the River Mincius, from the association with Virgil's *Eclogues*.

⁶ Triton.

¹ Æolus, son of Hippotes, the god of winds.

² One of the daughters of Nereus.

³ Many of the Cambridge poets have thus personified the river Cam.

⁴ The hyacinth sprung from the blood of Hyacinthus, *ai, ai*, the Greek exclamation of lament, inscribed thereon.

⁵ Saint Peter, who holds keys to the Kingdom of Heaven.

⁶ vapid. Songs may be taken to mean discourses.

The hungry sheep look up, and are not
fed, 125

But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they
draw,

Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim Wolf¹ with privy

paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.

But that two-handed engine² at the door 130
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no
more."

Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian
Muse,

And call the vales, and bid them hither
cast

Their bells and flowerets of a thousand
hues. 135

Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers
use³

Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing
brooks,

On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely
looks,

Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed
showers, 140

And purple all the ground with vernal
flowers.

Bring the rathe⁴ primrose that forsaken
dies,

The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with
jet,

The glowing violet, 145
The musk-rose, and the well-attired wood-
bine,

With cowslips wan that hang the pensive
head,

And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,

And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid
lies.

For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false sur-
mise.

Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding
seas

Wash far away, where'er thy bones are
hurled; 155

Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming
tide

Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;

Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus¹ old, 160

Where the great Vision of the guarded
mount²

Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.³
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with
ruth:

And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no
more, 165

For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery
floor.

So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled
ore 170

Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked
the waves,

Where, other groves and other streams
along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, 175
And hears the unexpressive⁴ nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and
love.

There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies, 179
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the Shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the
shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood. 185

Thus sang the uncouth⁵ Swain to the oaks
and rills,
While the still Morn went out with sandals
grey:
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric
lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the
hills, 190
And now was dropt into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched⁶ his mantle
blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures
new.

¹ Fabled Bellerium, the Latin name for Land's End
in Cornwall.
² The legend that the Archangel Michael appeared at
a craggy seat looking out over the sea, near the ruins of
an old Norman stronghold on St. Michael's Mount, op-
posite Penzance.
³ Both on the seacoast of Spain. ⁴ inexpressible.
⁵ unknown, for in 1637 Milton was still an "unknown"
poet.
⁶ gathered about him.

¹ The Roman Catholic Church.
² This obscurity is susceptible of many explanations:
perhaps, the two houses of Parliament.
³ frequent, visit. 4 early.

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

This sonnet was written at Cambridge, in 1631, shortly before Milton took his Master's degree.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.

Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near,
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.

Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.

All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

1631

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS IN- TENDED TO THE CITY

Written in November, 1642, when the forces of Charles I threatened the capture of London.

Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in arms,
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,

If deed of honor did thee ever please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.

He can requite thee, for he knows the charms

That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,

Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.

Lift not thy spear against the Muse's bower;
The great Emathian¹ conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower

Went to the ground; and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's Poet² had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

1642

¹ Alexander the Great.

² Euripides, to whose fame as a dramatist was attributed the leniency of the Spartans toward Athens.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL

ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT
THE COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGATION OF
THE GOSPEL

The ministers referred to were the Presbyterian clergy who threatened to impose their ecclesiastical system in place of the Episcopal. Milton as an Independent demanded absolute freedom of conscience and worship. He looked to Cromwell to secure this.

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud

Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,

And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,

While Darwen¹ stream, with blood of Scots inbrued,

And Dunbar² field, resounds thy praises loud,

And Worcester's³ laureate wreath: yet much remains

To conquer still; Peace hath her victories

No less renowned than War: new foes arise,

Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.

Help us to save free conscience from the paw

Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

1652

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONTE

The Waldenses, a reformed sect dwelling among the mountains of Piedmont, were persecuted by the Duke of Savoy. Cromwell addressed a stern remonstrance to that ruler.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints,
whose bones

Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;

Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,

¹ The battle of Preston, August 17, 1648.

² The battle of Dunbar against the Scots, September 3, 1650.

³ The battle of Worcester by which Cromwell suppressed the rising in favor of Charles II, September 3, 1651.

When all our fathers worshiped stocks and
stones,¹
Forget not: in thy book record their groans 5
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient
fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that
rolled
Mother with father down the rocks. Their
moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and
ashes sow 10
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth
sway
The triple Tyrant;² that from these may
grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy
way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.³
1655

Memorize

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days⁴ in this dark world and
wide,
And that one Talent⁵ which is death to
hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul
more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present 5
My true account, lest He returning
chide;
"Doth God exact day-labor, light de-
nied?"
I fondly⁶ ask. But Patience, to pre-
vent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not
need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who
best 10
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best.
His state
Is kingly: thousands⁷ at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without
rest;
They also serve who only stand and
wait."

1655

¹ When, before the Reformation, England was a Catholic country.
² The Pope, so called from his tiara surrounded by three crowns.

³ The woe which will be visited upon Babylon (interpreted as the Church of Rome) on the day of Judgment. Cf. Rev. xviii.

⁴ Milton was forty-four when his blindness became total.

⁵ For the parable of the talents, see Matt. xxv, 14-30.

⁶ foolishly.

⁷ of heavenly messengers.

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

This sonnet refers to Milton's second wife, Katharine Woodcock, who died in 1657.

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the
grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad hus-
band gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale
and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-
bed taint 5
Purification in the Old Law did save,¹
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without re-
straint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied
sight 10
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person
shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back
my night.

1658

PARADISE LOST

1658-1665

Milton's poetry was not the result of casual interest or occasional inspiration. With the seriousness which governed his entire life, he early devoted himself to preparation for his mission of giving to England a poem of the same greatness as Homer had given to Greece in the *Iliad*, or Virgil to Rome in the *Aeneid*. In choice of subject he wavered between legendary British history, which was the material suggested by the examples of Homer and Virgil, and a Biblical theme. Since the Puritans had come to think of themselves as God's Chosen People, in succession to the Hebrews, and the Biblical narratives as the supreme illustrations of God's dealings with men, it was natural for him to choose the latter. A list in Milton's handwriting of more than a hundred subjects from the Old and New Testaments shows how systematically he explored the possibilities of the field. In all Biblical history, two events stand out as of the highest importance, the Fall of Man from his original state of holiness, and his Redemption by Christ. The former was a subject of much theological controversy in Milton's day, the view taken of it marking the difference between the Calvinists, who held that all events, including the Fall of Adam,

¹ The reference is to the ceremonies of purification after childbirth, enjoined by Mosaic law. See Leviticus xii.

and the fate of every one of his sinful descendants, were immutably fixed in God's thought, and the Arminians, of whom Milton was one, who believed that God's decision in regard to the sinner was not irrevocable, but might through His grace be altered by repentance and faith in Christ. In view of its importance, both in the history of God's relation with man and in contemporary thought, Milton was constrained to choose the subject of the Fall.

Similarly Milton had a choice between two forms, both having classical authority, the epic and the tragedy. Certain of his subjects suggested the latter, notably the story of Samson which he later treated after the manner of Sophocles, but the Fall of Man was clearly epic in scope. Milton followed the account which had been elaborated by Christian fathers and rabbinical scholars upon the version given in Genesis. Vague allusions elsewhere in the Bible to Satan or Lucifer as an adversary of God, and to war in heaven, gave the suggestion for the revolt of part of the heavenly host under Lucifer's leadership. According to the practice of the epic, the poem begins in the thick of events after Lucifer and his rebel angels have been thrown from the battlements of heaven to the hell beneath. There follows their encouragement by their leader and their summons to a council, from which issues the plan to attack God's omnipotence by seducing into sin the man and woman whom He had created, to take with their descendants the places left vacant in heaven by the expulsion of the fallen angels. The first division of the poem closes with Lucifer's arrival on the earth and sight of the Garden of Eden. The second division of four books goes back over preceding events, the revolt of the angels, the creation of the universe and of man. The last four books deal with the temptation itself and the expulsion from paradise followed by Adam's prophetic view of the fortunes of his descendants in later history.

For his poetic form, Milton chose the pentameter blank verse which had been introduced by Surrey, and given currency by Marlowe and the dramatists. Milton's verse was, however, more stately and sustained than theirs. In his hands it became the equivalent in dignity and elevation of the dactylic hexameter of the classical epic poets. As in his earlier poetry Milton showed his power of using romantic suggestion and imagery in that strict subordination to the central theme which is the chief quality of classical art. The first two books of *Paradise Lost* afford magnificent illustration of this characteristic.

Milton had the material and form of *Paradise Lost* in mind for many years, but was prevented from beginning his work by his political writing, to which he was drawn by the situation of the time, and later by his Latin Secretaryship. Only in 1658 was he able to begin work in earnest and by this time he was totally blind. He composed largely at night, commit-

ting the verses to memory and dictating them later. The poem was finished in 1665. On account of the Great Fire in 1666 its publication was postponed until 1667, when Milton made an agreement to sell the copyright for £5 down, with two equal sums payable after successive sales of 1300 copies. *Paradise Lost* has come to be recognized as the greatest English epic, the poem which sets forth the traditional and historic faith of the English people in their God, and his dealings with the human race. It likewise embodies a complete philosophical survey of the universe. It is a monument of the time when men thought it still possible to achieve this sort of completeness and authority, a period of which Milton was the last great figure.

BOOK I

THE ARGUMENT

This First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject — Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall — the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of Heaven, with all his crew, into the great Deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastes into the midst of things; presenting Satan, with his Angels, now fallen into Hell — described here not in the Centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fittest called Chaos. Here Satan, with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who, next in order and dignity, lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise: their numbers; array of battle; their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech; comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven; but tells them, lastly, of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy, or report, in Heaven — for that Angels were long before this visible creation was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the Deep: the infernal Peers there sit in council.

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse,¹ that, on the secret top
Of Oreb,² or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd³ who first taught the chosen
seed

In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook⁴ that
flowed

¹ The power that inspired Moses, and David, as opposed to the nine muses of Greek mythology.

² The range of which Sinai was one mountain.

³ Moses.

⁴ At the foot of Mt. Moriah, on which stood the temple of Jerusalem.

Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
 Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
 That with no middle flight intends to soar
 Above the Aonian mount,¹ while it pursues 15
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
 And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
 Before all temples the upright heart and
 pure,
 Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from
 the first
 Wast present, and, with mighty wings out-
 spread, 20
 Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,²
 And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
 Illumine, what is low raise and support;
 That, to the highth of this great argument,³
 I may assert ⁴ Eternal Providence, 25
 And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first — for Heaven hides nothing from
 thy view,
 Nor the deep tract of Hell — say first what
 cause
 Moved our grand⁵ Parents, in that happy
 state,
 Favored of Heaven so highly, to fall off 30
 From their Creator, and transgress his will
 For one restraint, lords of the World besides.
 Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

The infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile,
 Stirred up with envy and revenge, de-
 ceived 35

The mother of mankind, what time his pride
 Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his
 host

Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
 To set himself in glory above his peers,
 He trusted to have equalled the Most
 High, 40

If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim
 Against the throne and monarchy of God,
 Raised impious war in Heaven and battle
 proud,

With vain attempt. Him the Almighty
 Power

Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal
 sky, 45

With hideous ruin and combustion, down
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
 In adamantine chains and penal fire,
 Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day
 and night 50

To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,

¹ The Aonian mount was Helicon, in Boeotia, sacred to the Muses. Milton means that he will surpass the classic poets, who drew their inspiration thence.

² To the conception of God moving on the face of the deep Milton adds that of the descent of the Holy Ghost "in bodily shape like a dove" at the baptism of Jesus.

³ theme, subject. ⁴ vindicate. ⁵ first, original.

Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
 Confounded, though immortal. But his
 doom

Reserved him to more wrath; for now the
 thought

Both of lost happiness and lasting pain 55
 Torments him: round he throws his baleful
 eyes,

That witnessed¹ huge affliction and dismay,
 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast
 hate.

At once, as far as Angels ken, he views
 The dismal situation waste and wild. 60

A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
 As one great furnace flamed; yet from those
 flames

No light; but rather darkness visible
 Served only to discover sights of woe,
 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where
 peace 65

And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
 That comes to all, but torture without end
 Still urges,² and a fiery deluge, fed
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.

Such place Eternal Justice had prepared 70
 For those rebellious; here their prison or-
 dained

In utter³ darkness, and their portion set,
 As far removed from God and light of
 Heaven

As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.⁴
 Oh how unlike the place from whence they
 fell! 75

There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
 With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous
 fire,

He soon discerns; and, weltering by his
 side,

One next himself in power, and next in crime,
 Long after known in Palestine, and named 80
 BEELZEBUB. To whom the Arch-Enemy,⁵

And thence in Heaven called SATAN, with
 bold words

Breaking the horrid silence, thus began: —
 "If thou beest he — but Oh how fallen!
 how changed

From him! — who, in the happy realms of
 light, 85

Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst
 outshine

Myriads, though bright — if he whom mu-
 tual league,

¹ gave evidence of. ² afflicts.

³ outer, the usual significance of utter in the seven-
 teenth century.

⁴ Milton thought of the earth as surrounded by ten cen-
 tric spheres and hung from the threshold of heaven. The
 terrestrial poles projected outward through the inter-
 tending spheres to the outermost one.

⁵ Satan, in Hebrew, means "adversary."

United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
 And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
 Joined with me once, now misery hath
 joined 90
 In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
 From what highth fallen: so much the
 stronger proved
 He with his thunder: and till then who knew
 The force of those dire arms? Yet not for
 those,
 Nor what the potent Victor in his rage 95
 Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
 Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed
 mind,
 And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
 That with the Mightiest raised me to con-
 tend,
 And to the fierce contention brought
 along 100
 Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
 That durst dislike his reign, and, me prefer-
 ring,
 His utmost power with adverse power op-
 posed
 In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
 And shook his throne. What though the
 field be lost? 105
 All is not lost — the unconquerable will,
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,
 And courage never to submit or yield:
 And what is else not to be overcome;
 That glory never shall his wrath or might 110
 Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
 With suppliant knee, and deify his power
 Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
 Doubted his empire — that were low indeed;
 That were an ignominy and shame be-
 neath 115
 This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of
 Gods,
 And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;
 Since, through experience of this great event,
 In arms not worse, in foresight much ad-
 vanced,
 We may with more successful hope re-
 solve 120
 To wage by force or guile eternal war,
 Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
 Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
 Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."

So spake the apostate Angel, though in
 pain, 125

Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep de-
 spair;

And him thus answered soon his bold Com-
 peer: —

"O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd
 Powers

That led the embattled Seraphim to war
 Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
 Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual
 King, 131

And put to proof his high supremacy,
 Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or
 fate!

Too well I see and rue the dire event
 That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat, 135
 Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty
 host

In horrible destruction laid thus low,
 As far as Gods and Heavenly Essences
 Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
 Invincible, and vigor soon returns, 140
 Though all our glory extinct, and happy
 state

Here swallowed up in endless misery.
 But what if He our Conqueror (whom I
 now

Of force ¹ believe almighty, since no less
 Than such could have o'erpowered such force
 as ours) 145

Have left us this our spirit and strength
 entire,

Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
 That we may so suffice ² his vengeful ire,
 Or do him mightier service as his thralls
 By right of war, whate'er his business be, 150
 Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
 Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep? ³
 What can it then avail though yet we feel
 Strength undiminished, or eternal being
 To undergo eternal punishment?" 155

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-
 Fiend replied: —

"Fallen Cherub,⁴ to be weak is miserable,
 Doing or suffering: but of this be sure —
 To do aught good never will be our task,
 But ever to do ill our sole delight, 160

As being the contrary to His high will
 Whom we resist. If then his providence
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
 Our labor must be to pervert that end,
 And out of good still to find means of evil; 165
 Which ofttimes may succeed so as perhaps
 Shall grieve him, if I fail ⁵ not, and disturb
 His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
 But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
 His ministers of vengeance and pursuit 170
 Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous
 hail,

Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
 The fiery surge that from the precipice
 Of Heaven received us falling; and the
 thunder,

¹ perforce. ² satisfy.

⁴ See note on line 737.

³ Chaos.
⁵ mistake.

Winged with red lightning and impetuous
rage, 175
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless
Deep.

Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn
Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and
wild, 180

The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid
flames

Cast pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbor there; 185
And, re-assembling our afflicted powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,
What reinforcement we may gain from
hope, 190

If not what resolution from despair."

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest Mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and
large, 195

Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon,¹ whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held,² or that sea-
beast 200

Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream.
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered³
skiff,

Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell, 205
With fixèd anchor in his scaly rind,
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays.

So stretched out huge in length the Arch-
Fiend lay,

Chained on the burning lake; nor ever
thence 210

Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the
will

And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he
sought 215

¹ Briareos, one of the Titans; Typhon, one of the giants. Both "earth-born," as the offspring of Uranus and Ge (Earth).

² An elaboration of a line of Æschylus, in which Typhon is described as living in a "Cilician den." Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia.

³ brought to a stand by the coming on of night.

Evil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn
On Man by him seduced, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance
poured. 220

Forthwith upright he rears from off the
pool

His mighty stature; on each hand the flames
Driven backward slope their pointing spires,
and, rolled

In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his
flight 225

Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
That felt unusual weight; till on dry land
He lights — if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
And such appeared in hue as when the
force 230

Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed¹ with mineral fury, aid the
winds, 235

And leave a singèd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke. Such resting found
the sole

Of unblest feet. Him followed his next
Mate;

Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian
flood

As gods, and by their own recovered
strength, 240

Not by the sufferance of supernal power.

"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
That we must change for Heaven? — this
mournful gloom

For that celestial light? Be it so, since
He 245

Who now is sovran can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from Him is
best,

Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made
supreme

Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors!
hail, 250

Infernal World! and thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor — one who
brings

A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of
Heaven. 255

¹ changed from a solid to a vapor by the action of heat.

What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than ¹ he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at
least

We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence: ²⁶⁰
Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and co-partners of our
loss, ²⁶⁵

Lie thus astonished ² on the oblivious ³ pool,
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion, or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in
Hell? " ²⁷⁰

So Satan spake; and him Beëlzebub
Thus answered: — "Leader of those armies
bright

Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have
foiled!

If once they hear that voice, their liveliest
pledge

Of hope in fears and dangers — heard so
oft ²⁷⁵

In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal — they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lie
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of
fire, ²⁸⁰

As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth!"

He scarce had ceased when the superior
Fiend

Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous
shield,

Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round, ²⁸⁵
Behind him cast. The broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose
orb

Through optic glass the Tuscan artist ⁴ views
At evening, from the top of Fesolè,
Or in Valdarno, ⁵ to descry new lands, ²⁹⁰
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
His spear — to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great Ammiral, ⁶ were but a wand —
He walked with, to support uneasy steps ²⁹⁵
Over the burning marle, not like those steps

¹ only less than, or, all but equal to.

² thunderstruck.

³ Oblivious is used in the now unusual causative sense of inducing forgetfulness.

⁴ Galileo, whom Milton had met at Florence.

⁵ valley of the river Arno, in which Florence lies.

⁶ Admiral, here transferred to the ship in which he sails, the flag-ship.

On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
Nathless ¹ he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamed sea he stood, and called ³⁰⁰
His legions — Angel Forms, who lay en-
tranced

Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the
brooks

In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High over-arched embower; or scattered
sedge ²

Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion ³
armed ³⁰⁵

Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves
o'erthrew

Busiris ⁴ and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses ³¹⁰
And broken chariot-wheels. So thick be-
strown,

Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.

He called so loud that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded: — "Princes, Potentates,
Warriors, the Flower of Heaven — once
yours; now lost, ³¹⁶

If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal Spirits! Or have ye chosen this
place

After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find ³²⁰

To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn

To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood ³²⁴

With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
The advantage, and, descending, tread us
down

Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf? —
Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!" ³³⁰

They heard, and were abashed, and up
they sprung

Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch,
On duty sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight ³³⁵
In which they were, or the fierce pains not
feel;

Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed
Innumerable. As when the potent rod

¹ nevertheless.

² The Hebrew name for the Red Sea signifies Sea of Sedge.

³ The great hunter of classic myth.

⁴ Busiris was really an earlier king than the Pharaoh of Moses.

Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy
cloud 340

Of locusts, warping¹ on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like Night, and darkened all the land of
Nile;²

So numberless were those bad Angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell, 345
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the
plain: 350

A multitude like which the populous North
Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
Rhene³ or the Danaw,⁴ when her barbarous
sons

Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands. 355
Forthwith, from every squadron and each
band,

The heads and leaders thither haste where
stood

Their great Commander — godlike Shapes,
and Forms

Excelling human; princely Dignities;
And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on
thrones, 360

Though of their names in Heavenly records
now

Be no memorial, blotted out and rased
By their rebellion from the Books of Life.
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names, till, wandering o'er
the earth, 365

Through God's high sufferance for the trial
of man,

By falsities and lies the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible
Glory of Him that made them to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorned 371

With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
And devils to adore for deities:

Then were they known to men by various
names,

And various idols through the heathen world.

Say, Muse, their names then known, who
first, who last, 376

Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,
At their great Emperor's call, as next in
worth

Came singly where he stood on the bare
strand,

While the promiscuous crowd stood yet
aloof. 380

The chief were those who, from the pit of
Hell

Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst
fix

Their seats, long after, next the seat of
God,

Their altars by His altar, gods adored 384

Among the nations round, and durst abide

Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned

Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed

Within His sanctuary itself their shrines,

Abominations; and with cursèd things

His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned, 390

And with their darkness durst affront His
light.

First, *Moloch*,¹ horrid King, besmeared with
blood

Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;

Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels
loud,

Their children's cries unheard that passed
through fire 395

To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite

Worshiped in Rabba² and her watery plain

In Argob² and in Basan,² to the stream

Of utmost Arnon.² Nor content with such

Audacious neighborhood, the wisest heart

Of Solomon he led by fraud to build 401

His temple right against the temple of God

On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove

The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet
thence

And black Gehenna called, the type of
Hell. 405

Next *Chemosh*, the obscene dread of Moab's
sons,

From Aroar³ to Nebo and the wild

Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon

And Horonaim, Seon's⁴ realm, beyond

The flowery dale of Sibma clad with
vines, 410

And Elealè to the Asphaltic Pool:

Peor his other name, when he enticed

Israel in Sittim,⁵ on their march from Nile,

To do him wanton rites, which cost them
woe.

¹ A nature-god, typifying the destructive power of the sun, called in Scripture the "abomination of the children of Ammon."

² Rabba, capital city of the Ammonites; Argob, district of the mountain range of Bashan, here called Basan; Arnon, a boundary river to the east of Jordan. Here, as throughout the following two hundred lines, Milton uses proper names for their grandiloquent sound and rich but vague suggestion, rather than for the purpose of conveying information.

³ The towns and mountains mentioned in lines 407-411 all lie on or near the Dead Sea, called the Asphaltic Pool from the bitumen or asphalt it contains.

⁴ King of the Ammonites.

⁵ See Numbers xxv.

¹ Moving in curves.

³ Rhine.

² See Exodus vi, 16-20.

⁴ Danube.

Yet thence his lustful orgies¹ he enlarged 415
Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they who, from the border-
ing flood

Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts 420
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general
names

Of *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth* — those male,
These feminine. For Spirits, when they
please,

Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure, 425
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they
choose,

Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aery purposes, 430
And works of love or enmity fulfil.

For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads, as
low 435

Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came *Astoreth*, whom the Phœnicians called
Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent
horns; 439

To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king² whose heart, though
large,

Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell 445
To idols foul. *Thammuz*³ came next be-
hind,

Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day, 449
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led, 455
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one

Who mourned in earnest, when the captive
Ark

Maimed his brute image, head and hands
lopt off,

In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge,⁴ 460
Where he fell flat and shamed his worshippers;
*Dagon*⁵ his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish; yet had his temple high
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon, 465
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him followed *Rimmon*, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Parphar, lucid streams.

He also against the house of God was
bold: 470

A leper once he lost, and gained a king⁶ —
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods 475
Whom he had vanquished. After these ap-
peared

A crew who, under names of old renown —
Osiris, *Isis*, *Orus*, and their train —
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek 480
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish
forms

Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
The infection, when their borrowed gold
composed

The calf in Oreb;⁴ and the rebel king⁵
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan, 485
Likening his Maker to the grazèd ox —
Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equalled⁶ with one
stroke

Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
Belial came last; than whom a Spirit more
lewd 490

Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself. To him no temple stood
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons,⁷ who filled 495
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,

1 ground-sill or threshold.

2 A sea-god, the national deity of the Philistines, who dwelt along the seashore. See 1 Samuel vi.

3 See 2 Kings v and xvi.

4 See 1 Kings xii, 28.

5 Jeroboam, who rebelled against Rehoboam. He made two calves of gold, setting one in Bethel and the other in Dan.

6 leveled, struck down. The reference is to the tenth plague, the smiting of "all the first-born of the land of Egypt . . . and all the first-born of the cattle."

7 See 1 Samuel ii, 12-17.

1 Used in the classic sense of rites, observances.

2 Solomon.

3 An important figure in Phœnician mythology, slain by a boar, but reviving again each spring, his death and resuscitation symbolizing the characteristics of winter and spring. When the river Adonis became reddened by the mud brought down from Lebanon by the spring torrents, it was believed to be the flowing afresh of Thammuz's wounds which caused the change of color.

And injury and outrage; and, when night ⁵⁰⁰
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the
sons

Of Belial, flown ¹ with insolence and wine.
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door

Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.² ⁵⁰⁵
These were the prime in order and in
might:

The rest were long to tell; though far re-
nowned

The Ionian gods — of Javan's issue held
Gods,³ yet confessed later than Heaven and
Earth,

Their boasted parents; — *Titan*, Heaven's
first-born, ⁵¹⁰

With his enormous brood, and birthright
seized

By younger *Saturn*: he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So *Jove* usurping reigned. These, first in
Crete

And Ida known, thence on the snowy top ⁵¹⁵
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian
cliff,⁴

Or in Dodona,⁵ and through all the bounds
Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields, ⁵²⁰
And o'er the Celtic ⁶ roamed the utmost Isles.

All these and more came flocking; but with
looks

Downcast and damp;⁷ yet such wherein ap-
peared

Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found
their Chief

Not in despair, to have found themselves not
lost ⁵²⁵

In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting,⁸ with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently
raised

Their fainting courage, and dispelled their
fears: ⁵³⁰

Then straight commands that, at the warlike
sound

Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
His mighty standard. That proud honor
claimed

Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
Who forthwith from the glittering staff un-
furled ⁵³⁵

The imperial ensign; which, full high ad-
vanced,

Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds: ⁵⁴⁰
At which the universal host up-sent

A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.

All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air, ⁵⁴⁵

With orient ¹ colors waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move

In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood ² ⁵⁵⁰
Of flutes and soft recorders ³ — such as raised

To highth of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage

Deliberate valor breathed, firm, and un-
moved

With dread of death to flight or foul re-
treat; ⁵⁵⁵

Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and
chase

Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and
pain

From mortal or immortal minds. Thus
they,

Breathing united force with fixèd thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes that
charmed ⁵⁶⁰

Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And
now

Advanced in view they stand — a horrid
front

Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in
guise

Of warriors old, with ordered spear and
shield, ⁵⁶⁵

Awaiting what command their mighty Chief
Had to impose. He through the armèd files

Darts his experienced eye, and soon tra-
verse ⁴

The whole battalion views — their order due,
Their visages and stature as of Gods; ⁵⁷⁰

Their number last he sums. And now his
heart

Distends with pride, and, hardening in his
strength,

Glories: for never, since created Man,

¹ flushed.

² For the allusions, see Genesis XIX, Judges XIX.

³ Uranus (Heaven) and Ge (earth) had as offspring the
Titans. One of these, Cronos (Saturn in Roman mythol-
ogy) dethroned his father, and was in turn dethroned by
his son Zeus, whose mother was Rhea.

⁴ A part of Mt. Parnassus, the seat of the famous or-
acle of Apollo.

⁵ In Epirus, where there was an oracle of Zeus.

⁶ i.e. Celtic land — a Greek idiom.

⁷ depressed.

⁸ re-collecting.

¹ bright, lustrous.

² grave and stern, in contrast with the softer Lydian
mode.

³ flageolets.

⁴ across.

Met such embodied force as, named with
 these,
 Could merit more than that small in-
 fantry⁵⁷⁵
 Warred on by cranes¹ — though all the giant
 brood
 Of Phlegra² with the heroic race were joined
 That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each
 side
 Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
 In fable or romance of Uther's son,³ 580
 Begirt with British and Armoric knights;⁴
 And all who since, baptized or infidel,
 Jousted in Aspramont,⁵ or Montalban,
 Damasco,⁶ or Marocco, or Trebisonde,
 Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore 585
 When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
 By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
 Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
 Their dread Commander. He, above the
 rest
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent, 590
 Stood like a tower. His form had yet not
 lost
 All her original brightness, nor appeared
 Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
 Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-
 risen
 Looks through the horizontal misty air 595
 Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the
 moon,
 In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
 On half the nations, and with fear of change
 Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet
 shone
 Above them all the Archangel: but his
 face 600
 Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and
 care
 Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
 Of dauntless courage, and considerate⁷ pride
 Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
 Signs of remorse⁸ and passion,⁹ to behold 605
 The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
 (Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
 For ever now to have their lot in pain —
 Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
 Of Heaven, and from eternal splendors
 flung 610

For his revolt — yet faithful how they stood,¹
 Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire
 Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain
 pines,

With singed top their stately growth, though
 bare,

Stands on the blasted heath. He now pre-
 pared 615

To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they
 bend

From wing to wing, and half enclose him
 round

With all his peers: Attention held them mute.
 Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of
 scorn,

Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at
 last 620

Words interwove with sighs found out their
 way: —

"O myriads of immortal Spirits! O
 Powers

Matchless, but with the Almighty! — and
 that strife

Was not inglorious, though the event was
 dire, 624

As this place testifies, and this dire change,
 hateful to utter. But what power of mind,
 Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth

Of knowledge past or present, could have
 feared

How such united force of gods, how such
 As stood like these, could ever know re-
 pulse? 630

For who can yet believe, though after loss,
 That all these puissant legions, whose exile
 Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to reascend,
 Self-raised, and re-possess their native seat?

For me, be witness all the host of Heaven, 635
 If counsels different, or danger shunned

By me, have lost our hopes. But he who
 reigns

Monarch in Heaven till then as one secure
 Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,

Consent or custom, and his regal state 640
 Put forth at full, but still his strength con-
 cealed —

Which tempted our attempt, and wrought
 our fall.

Henceforth his might we know, and know our
 own,

So as not either to provoke, or dread
 New war provoked: our better part re-
 mains 645

To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
 What force effected not; that he no less

At length from us may find, Who overcomes

¹ The pygmies of Ethiopia were said to fight with the cranes who invaded their country.

² The wars of the giants and the gods were fought at Phlegra in Macedonia.

³ King Arthur.

⁴ Armoric knights are knights of Brittany.

⁵ Aspramont, in Provence; Montalban, in Languedoc; Trebisonde, in Cappadocia; are all famous in the annals of chivalry.

⁶ Damascus, the scene of many combats during the Crusades.

⁷ thoughtful.

⁸ pity.

⁹ strong feeling, not anger.

¹ "To behold," from line 605 is understood in this construction.

By force hath overcome but half his foe.
 Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so
 rife 650
 There went a fame in Heaven that He ere
 long
 Intended to create, and therein plant
 A generation whom his choice regard
 Should favor equal to the Sons of Heaven.
 Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps 655
 Our first eruption — thither, or elsewhere;
 For this infernal pit shall never hold
 Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss
 Long under darkness cover. But these
 thoughts
 Full counsel must mature. Peace is de-
 spaired; 660
 For who can think submission? War, then,
 war
 Open or understood, must be resolved."
 He spake; and, to confirm his words, out-
 flew
 Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the
 thighs
 Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze 665
 Far round illumined Hell. Highly they
 raged
 Against the Highest and fierce with grasped
 arms
 Clashed on their sounding shields the din of
 war,
 Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.
 There stood a hill not far, whose grisly
 top 670
 Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest
 entire
 Shone with a glossy scurf — undoubted sign
 That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
 The work of sulphur.¹ Thither, winged with
 speed,
 A numerous brigad hastened: as when
 bands 675
 Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
 Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
 Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on —
 Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
 From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks
 and thoughts 680
 Were always downward bent, admiring more
 The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden
 gold,
 Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
 In vision beatific. By him first
 Men also, and by his suggestion taught, 685
 Ransacked the Centre,² and with impious
 hands

Rifted the bowels of their mother Earth
 For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
 Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
 And digged out ribs of gold. Let none ad-
 mire 690
 That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
 Deserve the precious bane. And here let
 those
 Who boast in mortal things, and wondering
 tell
 Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,¹
 Learn how their greatest monuments of
 fame, 695
 And strength, and art, are easily outdone
 By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
 What in an age they, with incessant toil
 And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
 Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared, 700
 That underneath had veins of liquid fire
 Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
 With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
 Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion-
 dross.
 A third as soon had formed within the
 ground 705
 A various mould, and from the boiling cells
 By strange conveyance filled each hollow
 nook;
 As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
 To many a row of pipes the sound-board
 breathes.
 Anon out of the earth a fabric huge 710
 Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
 Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet —
 Built like a temple, where pilasters round
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
 With golden architrave; nor did there
 want 715
 Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures
 graven:
 The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon
 Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
 Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
 Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat 720
 Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
 In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
 Stood fixed her stately highth; and straight
 the doors,
 Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
 Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth 725
 And level pavement: from the archèd roof,
 Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
 Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
 With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
 As from a sky. The hasty multitude 730
 Admiring entered; and the work some
 praise,

¹ The Pyramids.

¹ In the seventeenth century and earlier, sulphur was believed to be the formative element of metals.

² Here, as elsewhere, the earth, the center of the universe, according to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy.

And some the Architect. His hand was known

In Heaven by many a towered structure high,

Where sceptred Angels held their residence,
And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King 735

Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the Orders ¹ bright.

Nor was his name ² unheard or unadored
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land

Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell 740
From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry

Joeve
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn

To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day, and with the setting sun

Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star, 745
On Lemnos, the Ægæan isle. Thus they

relate,
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout

Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did

he scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent, 750

With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the wingèd Haralds, by command

Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host

proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held 755

At Pandæmonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons

called
From every band and squarèd regiment

By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping

came 760
Attended. All access was thronged; the

gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious

hall
(Though like a covered field, where cham-

pions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair

Defied the best of Panim chivalry 765
To mortal combat, or career with lance),

Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in
the air,

Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As
bees

¹ The mediæval division of all celestial beings into
three Hierarchies, each comprising three Orders, or

Choirs, made the lowest Hierarchy include Angels, Arch-
angels, Principalities; the next higher, Powers, Virtues,

and Dominions; the highest included Thrones, Cherubim,
and Seraphim.

² Vulcan.

In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus
rides,

Pour forth their populous youth about the
hive 770

In clusters; they among fresh dews and
flowers

Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,

New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
Their state-affairs: so thick the aerie

crowd 775
Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal

given,
Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed

In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow

room
Throng numberless — like that pygmean

race 780
Beyond the Indian mount; or faery elves,

Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,

Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth 785

Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth
and dance

Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.

Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at

large, 790
Though without number still, amidst the hall

Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions like themselves,

The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
In close recess ¹ and secret conclave sat, 795

A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent ² and full. After short silence

then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

BOOK II

THE ARGUMENT

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan — to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage; is honored and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell-gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between Hell and Heaven. With what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new World which he sought.

¹ retirement.

² crowded.

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus¹ and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and
gold,

Satan exalted sat, by merit raised 5
To that bad eminence; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven; and, by success²
untaught,

His proud imaginations thus displayed: — 10
“Powers and Dominions, Deities of
Heaven! —

For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigor, though oppressed and
fallen,

I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent
Celestial Virtues rising will appear 15
More glorious and more dread than from no
fall,

And trust themselves to fear no second
fate! —

Me though just right, and the fixed laws of
Heaven,

Did first create your leader — next, free
choice,

With what besides in council or in fight 20
Hath been achieved of merit — yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Established in a safe, unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier
state

In Heaven, which follows dignity, might
draw 25

Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's
aim

Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest
share

Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no
good 30

For which to strive, no strife can grow up
there

From faction: for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence; none whose portion is so small
Of present pain that with ambitious mind
Will covet more! With this advantage,
then, 35

To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us; and by what best
way, 40

Whether of open war or covert guile,

1 An island in the Persian Gulf.

2 outcome.

We now debate. Who can advise may
speak.”

He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred
king,

Stood up — the strongest and the fiercest
Spirit

That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by
despair. 45

His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse,
He recked not, and these words thereafter
spake: — 50

“My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need; not
now.

For, while they sit contriving, shall the
rest —

Millions that stand in arms, and longing
wait 55

The signal to ascend — sit lingering here,
Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-
place

Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of His tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! let us rather choose, 60
Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at
once

O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless
way,

Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when, to meet the
noise

Of his almighty engine, he shall hear 65
Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his Angels, and his throne itself
Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange
fire,

His own invented torments. But perhaps 70
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe!
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend 75
Up to our native seat; descent and fall
To us is adverse.¹ Who but felt of late,
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the Deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight 80
We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy, then;
The event is feared! Should we again pro-
voke

¹ Refers to the mediæval conception that angels are
not subject to natural laws, such as that of gravitation.
Their tendency is upward, not downward.

Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may
find
To our destruction, if there be in Hell
Fear to be worse destroyed! What can be
worse 85
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss,
condemned
In this abhorred deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge 90
Inexorably, and the torturing hour,
Calls us to penance? More destroyed than
thus,
We should be quite abolished, and expire.
What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which, to the highth en-
raged, 95
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential — happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being! —
Or, if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst 100
On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal Throne:
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge." 105
He ended frowning, and his look de-
nounced¹
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On the other side up
rose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane.
A fairer person lost not heaven; he seemed 110
For dignity composed, and high exploit.
But all was false and hollow; though his
tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse
appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were
low — 115
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful. Yet he pleased the
ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began: —
"I should be much for open war, O Peers,
As not behind in hate, if what was urged 120
Main reason to persuade immediate war
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success;
When he who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels and in what excels 125
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.

¹ threatened.

First, what revenge? The towers of Heaven
are filled
With armed watch, that render all access 130
Impregnable: oft on the bordering Deep
Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,
Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our
way
By force, and at our heels all Hell should
rise 135
With blackest insurrection to confound
Heaven's purest light, yet our great Enemy,
All incorruptible, would on his throne
Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mould,
Incapable of stain, would soon expel 140
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate
The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage;
And that must end us; that must be our
cure — 145
To be no more. Sad cure! for who would
lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eter-
nity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated Night, 150
Devoid of sense and motion? And who
knows,
Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
Can give it, or will ever? ¹ How he can
Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.
Will He, so wise, let loose at once his ire, 155
Belike through impotence or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish, and end
Them in his anger whom his anger saves
To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we,
then?'
Say they who counsel war; 'we are de-
creed, 160
Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then,
worst —
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What when we fled amain, pursued and
strook 165
With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and be-
sought
The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then
seemed
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake? That sure
was worse.

¹ The meaning here is "even granted that death is to be desired, who knows whether God has the power or the will to destroy angelic substances?"

What if the breath that kindled those grim
fires, 170

Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold
rage,

And plunge us in the flames; or from above
Should intermitted vengeance arm again

His red right hand to plague us? What if all
Her stores were opened, and this firma-

ment 175

Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall

One day upon our heads; while we perhaps,
Designing or exhorting glorious war,

Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled, 180
Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and

prey

Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,

There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved, 185

Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.
War, therefore, open or concealed, alike

My voice dissuades; for what can force or
guile

With Him, or who deceive His mind, whose
eye

Views all things at one view? He from
Heaven's highth 190

All these our motions vain sees and derides,
Not more almighty to resist our might

Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we, then, live thus vile — the race of

Heaven

Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer
here 195

Chains and these torments? Better these
than worse,

By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,

The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust 200

That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
If we were wise, against so great a foe

Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh when those who at the spear are bold

And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and
fear 205

What yet they know must follow — to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,

The sentence of their conqueror. This is
now

Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our Supreme Foe in time may much re-

mit 210

His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
Not mind us not offending, satisfied

With what is punished; whence these raging
fires

Will slacken, if his breath stir not their
flames.

Our purer essence then will overcome 215
Their noxious vapor; or, inured, not feel;

Or, changed at length, and to the place con-
formed

In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,

This horror will grow mild, this darkness
light; 220

Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what

change
Worth waiting — since our present lot ap-

pears
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,

If we procure not to ourselves more woe." 225
Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's

garb,
Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,

Not peace; and after him thus Mammon
spake: —

"Either to disenthroned the King of Heaven
We war, if war be best, or to regain 230

Our own right lost. Him to unthroned we
then

May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.

The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter; for what place can be for us 235

Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's
Lord Supreme

We overpower? Suppose he should relent,
And publish grace to all, on promise made

Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive 240

Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead

sing
Forced Halleluiahs, while he lordly sits

Our envied sovran, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odors and ambrosial flowers, 245

Our servile offerings? This must be our task
In Heaven, this our delight. How wear-

some
Eternity so spent in worship paid

To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
By force impossible, by leave obtained 250

Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek

Our own good from ourselves, and from our
own

Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free and to none accountable, preferring 255

Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear

Then most conspicuous when great things of
small,

Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create, and in what place soe'er ²⁶⁰
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labor and endurance. This deep
world

Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-
ruling Sire

Choose to reside, his glory unobscured, ²⁶⁵
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne, from whence deep thun-
ders roar,

Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles
Hell!

As He our darkness, cannot we His light
Imitate when we please? This desert soil ²⁷⁰
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heaven shew
more?

Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements, these piercing fires ²⁷⁵
As soft as now severe, our temper changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible ¹ of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may ²⁸⁰
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I ad-
vise."

He scarce had finished, when such murmur
filled

The assembly as when hollow rocks re-
tain ²⁸⁵

The sound of blustering winds, which all
night long

Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence
lull

Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by
chance,

Or pinnacle, anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest. Such applause was
heard ²⁹⁰

As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace: for such another field ²

They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the
fear

Of thunder and the sword of Michaël
Wrought still within them; and no less de-
sire ²⁹⁵

To found this nether empire, which might
rise,

By policy and long process' of time,

In emulation opposite to Heaven.

Which when Beëlzebub perceived — than
whom,

Satan except, none higher sat — with
grave ³⁰⁰

Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state. Deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care;

And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood, ³⁰⁵

With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear

The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
Drew audience and attention still as night

Or summer's noontide air, while thus he
spake: —

"Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring
of Heaven, ³¹⁰

Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now

Must we renounce, and, changing style, be
called

Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote
Inclines — here to continue, and build up
here

A growing empire; doubtless! while we
dream, ³¹⁵

And know not that the King of Heaven hath
doomed

This place our dungeon — not our safe re-
treat

Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new
league

Banded against his throne, but to remain ³²⁰
In strictest bondage, though thus far re-
moved,

Under the inevitable curb, reserved
His captive multitude. For He, be sure,

In high or depth, still first and last will
reign

Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part ³²⁵
By our revolt, but over Hell extend
His empire, and with iron sceptre rule

Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.
What ¹ sit we then projecting peace and war?

War hath determined ² us and foiled with
loss ³³⁰

Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be
given

To us enslaved, but custody severe,
And stripes and arbitrary punishment

Inflicted? and what peace can we return, ³³⁵
But, to our power, hostility and hate,
Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though
slow,

Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice

In doing what we most in suffering feel? ³⁴⁰
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade

¹ sense.

² battle.

¹ to what end, why.

² undone, made an end of.

Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or
siege,
Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? There is a place ³⁴⁵
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven
Err not) — another World, the happy seat
Of some new race, called Man, about this
time

To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favored
more ³⁵⁰
Of Him who rules above; so was His will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath
That shook Heaven's whole circumference
confirmed.

Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what
mould ³⁵⁵

Or substance, how endued, and what their
power

And where their weakness: how attempted
best,

By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be
shut,

And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie ex-
posed, ³⁶⁰

The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defence who hold it: here, perhaps,
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset — either with Hell-fire

To waste his whole creation, or possess ³⁶⁵
All as our own, and drive, as we are driven,
The puny habitants; or, if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God

May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would sur-
pass ³⁷⁰

Common revenge, and interrupt His joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise
In His disturbance; when his darling sons,
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall
curse

Their frail original, and faded bliss — ³⁷⁵
Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires." Thus Beëlzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel — first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed: for

whence, ³⁸⁰

But from the author of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still
serves ³⁸⁵

His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those Infernal States, and joy

Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus re-
news: —

"Well have ye judged, well ended long
debate, ³⁹⁰

Synod of Gods, and, like to what ye are,
'Great things resolved, which from the lowest
deep

Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient Seat — perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence, with neigh-
boring arms, ³⁹⁵

And opportune excursion, we may chance
Re-enter Heaven; or else in some mild zone
Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light,
Secure, and at the brightening orient beam
Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious
air, ⁴⁰⁰

To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom
shall we send

In search of this new World? whom shall we
find

Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering
feet

The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss, ⁴⁰⁵
And through the palpable obscure find out

His uncouth way, or spread his aerie flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings
Over the vast Abrupt,¹ ere he arrive
The happy Isle? What strength, what art,

can then ⁴¹⁰

Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict senteries and stations
thick

Of Angels watching round? Here he had
need

All circumspection: and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we
send ⁴¹⁵

The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."

This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt. But all sat mute, ⁴²⁰
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts;
and each

In other's countenance read his own dismay,
Astonished. None among the choice and
prime

Of those Heaven-warring champions could be
found

So hardy as to proffer or accept, ⁴²⁵
Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised

¹ That portion of chaos separating earth from Hell,
which space is apparently conceived as a sort of chasm or
gulf.

Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
 Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus
 spake: —

“O Progeny of Heaven! Emptyreal
 Thrones! 430

With reason hath deep silence and demur
 Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the
 way

And hard, that out of Hell leads up to Light.
 Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
 Outrageous to devour, immures us round 435
 Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
 Barred over us, prohibit all egress.

These passed, if any pass, the void profound
 Of unessential Night¹ receives him next,
 Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being 440
 Threatens him, plunged in that abortive
 gulf.

If thence he scape, into whatever world,
 Or unknown region, what remains him less
 Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
 But I should ill become this throne, O
 Peers, 445

And this imperial sovranity, adorned
 With splendor, armed with power, if aught
 proposed

And judged of public moment in the shape
 Of difficulty or danger, could deter
 Me from attempting. Wherefore do I as-
 sume 450

These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
 Refusing to accept as great a share
 Of hazard as of honor, due alike
 To him who reigns, and so much to him due
 Of hazard more as he above the rest 455
 High honored sits? Go, therefore, mighty

Powers,
 Terror of Heaven, though fallen; intend² at
 home,

While here shall be our home, what best may
 ease

The present misery, and render Hell
 More tolerable; if there be cure or charm 460
 To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
 Of this ill mansion: intermit no watch
 Against a wakeful Foe, while I abroad
 Through all the coasts of dark destruction
 seek

Deliverance for us all. This enterprise 465
 None shall partake with me.” Thus saying,
 rose

The Monarch, and prevented all reply;
 Prudent lest, from his resolution raised,³
 Others among the chief might offer now,
 Certain to be refused, what erst they
 feared, 470

And, so refused, might in opinion stand
 His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
 Which he through hazard huge must earn.

But they
 Dreaded not more the adventure than his
 voice

Forbidding; and at once with him they
 rose. 475

Their rising all at once was as the sound
 Of thunder heard remote. Towards him
 they bend

With awful reverence prone, and as a God
 Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven.
 Nor failed they to express how much they
 praised 480

That for the general safety he despised
 His own: for neither do the Spirits damned
 Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should
 boast

Their specious deeds on earth, which glory
 excites,

Or close ambition varnished o'er with
 zeal. 485

Thus they their doubtful consultations
 dark

Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
 As, when from mountain-tops the dusky
 clouds

Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps,
 o'erspread

Heaven's cheerful face, the louring ele-
 ment 490

Scowls o'er the darkened landscape snow or
 shower,

If chance the radiant sun, with farewell
 sweet,

Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
 The birds their notes renew, and bleating
 herds

Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings. 495
 O shame to men! Devil with devil damned

Firm concord holds; men only disagree
 Of creatures rational, though under hope
 Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming
 peace,

Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife 500
 Among themselves, and levy cruel wars

Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
 As if (which might induce us to accord)

Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
 That day, and night for his destruction
 wait! 505

The Stygian council thus dissolved; and
 forth

In order came the grand Infernal Peers:
 Midst came their mighty Paramount,¹ and
 seemed

¹ having no real essence, or being.
³ encouraged by his resolute spirit.

² consider.

¹ lord, chief.

Alone the Antagonist of Heaven, nor less
Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp
supreme, 510

And god-like imitated state: him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim inclosed
With bright emblazonry, and horrent ¹ arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpet's regal sound the great re-
sult: 515

Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By harald's voice explained; ² the hollow
Abyss

Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deafening shout returned them loud
acclaim. 520

Thence more at ease their minds, and some-
what raised

By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd
Powers

Disband; and, wandering, each his several
way

Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest
find 525

Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.

Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,

As at the Olympian games or Pythian
fields; 530

Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form:

As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush

To battle in the clouds; before each van 535
Prick forth the aerie knights, and couch their
spears,

Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of heaven the welkin burns.

Others, with vast Typhœan ³ rage, more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the

air 540

In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild
uproar: —

As when Alcides, from Œchalia crowned
With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and

tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian
pines,

And Lichas from the top of Œta threw 545
Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing

With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall

By doom of battle, and complain that
Fate 550

¹ bristling.

² filled.

³ See Book I, l. 199.

Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or
Chance.

Their song was partial; but the harmony
(What could it less when Spirits immortal
sing?)

Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more

sweet 555
(For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the
Sense)

Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and
Fate —

Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge abso-
lute — 560

And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,

Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame:

Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy! — 565
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm

Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm the obdurèd ¹ breast

With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross

bands, 570
On bold adventure to discover wide

That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend

Four ways their flying march, along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge 575

Into the burning lake their baleful streams —
Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;

Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud

Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlege-
ton, 580

Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with
rage.

Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls

Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being for-
gets — 585

Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen continent

Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual
storms

Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm
land

Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin
seems 590

Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound as that Serbonian ² bog

¹ hardened.
² Lake Serbonis, between Damiata and Mount Casius,
was sometimes so covered with sand that armies advanced
upon it as upon solid ground.

Betwixt Damia and Mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk: the parching
air

Burns froze, and cold performs the effect of
fire. 595

Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,
At certain revolutions all the damned
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter
change

Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more
fierce,

From beds of raging fire to starve in ice 600
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to
pine

Immovable, infixed, and frozen round
Periods of time, — thence hurried back to
fire.

They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment, 605
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to
lose

In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink;
But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the
attempt, 610

Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn, the adventurous
bands, 615

With shuddering horror pale, and eyes
aghast,

Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary
vale

They passed, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp, 620
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and
shades of death —

A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good;
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature
breeds,

Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious
things, 625

Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned or fear con-
ceived,

Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire.

Meanwhile the Adversary of God and
Man,

Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest de-
sire, 630

Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of
Hell

Explores his solitary flight: sometimes

He scours the right hand coast, sometimes
the left;

Now shaves with level wing the Deep, then
soars

Up to the fiery concave towering high. 635

As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds

Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants

bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading
flood, 640

Through the wide Ethiopian ¹ to the Cape,
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so
seemed

Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear
Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds
were brass, 645

Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable Shape.

The one seemed woman to the waist, and
fair, 650

But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast — a serpent armed
With mortal sting. About her middle round

A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and
rung 655

A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would
creep,

If aught disturbed their noise, into her
womb,

And kennel there; yet there still barked and
howled

Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these
Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that
parts 660

Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called

In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland ² witches, while the laboring
moon 665

Eclipses at their charms. The other Shape —
If shape it might be called that shape had
none

Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be called that shadow
seemed,

For each seemed either — black it stood as
Night, 670

Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,

¹ Ethiopian Sea, or the Indian Ocean.

² Lapland was long held to be the home and especial meeting-place of witches.

And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
 Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
 The monster moving onward came as fast 675
 With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.
 The undaunted Fiend what this might be admired —
 Admired, not feared (God and his Son except,
 Created thing naught valued he nor shunned),
 And with disdainful look thus first began: — 680
 “Whence and what art thou, execrable Shape,
 That dar’st, though grim and terrible, advance
 Thy miscreated front athwart my way
 To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,
 That be assured, without leave asked of thee. 685
 Retire; or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
 Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heaven.”
 To whom the Goblin,¹ full of wrath, replied: —
 “Art thou that Traitor-Angel, art thou he,
 Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then 690
 Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
 Drew after him the third part of Heaven’s sons,
 Conjured² against the Highest — for which both thou
 And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
 To waste eternal days in woe and pain? 695
 And reckon’st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven,
 Hell-doomed, and breath’st defiance here and scorn,
 Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
 Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment, 699
 False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings,
 Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
 Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
 Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.”
 So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,
 So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold 705
 More dreadful and deform. On the other side,

Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
 Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
 That fires the length of Ophiuchus¹ huge
 In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair 710
 Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
 Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands
 No second stroke intend; and such a frown
 Each cast at the other as when two black clouds,
 With heaven’s artillery fraught, come rattling on 715
 Over the Caspian, — then stand front to front
 Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
 To join their dark encounter in mid-air.
 So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell
 Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood; 720
 For never but once more was either like
 To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
 Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
 Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat
 Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key, 725
 Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.
 “O father, what intends thy hand,” she cried,
 “Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
 Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
 Against thy father’s head? And know’st for whom? 730
 For Him who sits above, and laughs the while
 At thee, ordained his drudge to execute
 Whate’er his wrath, which He calls justice, bids —
 His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!”
 She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest 735
 Forbore: then these to her Satan returned: —
 “So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
 Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,
 Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
 What it intends, till first I know of thee 740
 What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why,
 In this infernal vale first met, thou call’st
 Me father, and that phantasm call’st my son.
 I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
 Sight more detestable than him and thee.” 745
 To whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied: —
 “Hast thou forgot me, then; and do I seem

¹ Used in the generic sense of demon or fiend.
² bound by oath.

¹ A large constellation of the northern hemisphere.

Now in thine eye so foul? — once deemed so
 fair
 In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in
 sight
 Of all the Seraphim with thee combined 750
 In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,
 All on a sudden miserable pain
 Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy
 swum
 In darkness, while thy head flames thick and
 fast
 Threw forth, till on the left side opening
 wide, 755
 Likest to thee in shape and countenance
 bright,
 Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
 Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement
 seized
 All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled
 afraid
 At first, and called me *Sin*, and for a sign 760
 Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
 I pleased, and with attractive graces won
 The most averse — thee chiefly, who, full oft
 Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,
 Becam'st enamored; and such joy thou
 took'st 765
 With me in secret that my womb conceived
 A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
 And fields were fought in Heaven: wherein
 remained
 (For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
 Clear victory; to our part loss and rout 770
 Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,
 Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven,
 down
 Into this Deep; and in the general fall
 I also: at which time this powerful Key
 Into my hands was given, with charge to
 keep 775
 These gates for ever shut, which none can
 pass
 Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
 Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,
 Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
 Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes. 780
 At last this odious offspring whom thou
 seest,
 Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
 Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and
 pain
 Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
 Transformed: but he my inbred enemy 785
 Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
 Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out
Death!
 Hell trembled at the hideous name, and
 sighed

From all her caves, and back resounded
Death!
 I fled; but he pursued (though more, it
 seems, 790
 Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter
 far,
 Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,
 And, in embraces forcible and foul
 Engendering with me, of that rape begot
 These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless
 cry 795
 Surround me, as thou saw'st — hourly con-
 ceived
 And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
 To me: for, when they list, into the womb
 That bred them they return, and howl, and
 gnaw
 My bowels, their repast; then, bursting
 forth 800
 Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,
 That rest or intermission none I find.
 Before mine eyes in opposition sits
 Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them
 on,
 And me, his parent, would full soon de-
 vour 805
 For want of other prey, but that he knows
 His end with mine involved, and knows that I
 Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
 Whenever that shall be: so Fate pronounced.
 But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun 810
 His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
 To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
 Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal
 dint,
 Save He who reigns above, none can resist."
 She finished; and the subtle Fiend his
 lore 815
 Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered
 smooth: —
 "Dear daughter — since thou claim'st me
 for thy sire,
 And my fair son here show'st me, the dear
 pledge
 Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and
 joys
 Then sweet, now sad to mention, through
 dire change 820
 Befallen us unforeseen, unthought-of —
 know,
 I come no enemy, but to set free
 From out this dark and dismal house of pain
 Both him and thee, and all the Heavenly host
 Of Spirits that, in our just pretences
 armed, 825
 Fell with us from on high. From them I go
 This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
 Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread

The unfounded Deep, and through the void
immense
To search, with wandering quest, a place
foretold 830
Should be—and, by concurring signs, ere
now
Created vast and round—a place of bliss
In the purlieues of Heaven; and therein
placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room, though more re-
moved, 835
Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multi-
tude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or
aught
Than this more secret, now designed, I haste
To know; and, this once known, shall soon
return,
And bring ye to the place where thou and
Death 840
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom,¹ air, imbalm'd
With odors. There ye shall be fed and
filled
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey."
He ceased; for both seemed highly pleased,
and Death 845
Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed his
maw
Destined to that good hour. No less re-
joiced
His mother bad, and thus bespake her Sire:—
"The key of this infernal Pit, by due 850
And by command of Heaven's all-powerful
King,
I keep, by Him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o'ermatched by living
might. 855
But what owe I to His commands above,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me
down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confined,
Inhabitant of Heaven and heavenly-born
Here in perpetual agony and pain, 861
With terrors and with clamors compassed
round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey 865
But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring
me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
1 bending, or yielding.

The gods who live at ease, where I shall
reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as be seems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without
end." 870
Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, toward the gate rolling her bestial
train,
Forthwith the huge porcullis high up-drew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian
Powers 875
Could once have moved; then in the keyhole
turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound, 880
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She opened; but to shut
Excelled her power: the gates wide open
stood,
That with extended wings a bannered
host, 885
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass
through
With horse and chariots ranked in loose
array;
So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth
Cast forth redounding² smoke and ruddy
flame.
Before their eyes in sudden view appear 890
The secrets of the hoary Deep—a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension; where length, breadth,
and highth,
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest
Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold 895
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four cham-
pions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms: they around the
flag 900
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift,
or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
Of Barca or Cyrene's² torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds, and
poise 905
Their lighter wings. To whom these most
adhere
He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits,
1 rolling in billows. 2 Cities of northern Africa.

And by decision more imbroils the fray
 By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,
 Chance governs all. Into this wild
 Abyss, 910
 The womb of Nature, and perhaps her
 grave,
 Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
 But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
 Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
 Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain 915
 His dark materials to create more worlds —
 Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend
 Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a
 while,
 Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
 He had to cross. Nor was his ear less
 pealed 920
 With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
 Great things with small) than when Bellona
 storms
 With all her battering engines, bent to rase
 Some capital city; or less than if this frame
 Of heaven were falling, and these ele-
 ments 925
 In mutiny had from her axle torn
 The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad
 vans¹
 He spreads for flight, and, in the surging
 smoke
 Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a
 league,
 As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides 930
 Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
 A vast vacuity. All unawares,
 Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb-down he
 drops
 Ten thousand fadom deep, and to this hour
 Down had been falling, had not, by ill
 chance, 935
 The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
 Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
 As many miles aloft. That fury stayed —
 Quenched in a boggy Syrtis,² neither sea,
 Nor good dry land — nigh foundered, on he
 fares, 940
 Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
 Half flying; behoves him now both oar and
 sail.
 As when a gryphon through the wilderness
 With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale,
 Pursues the Arimasian,³ who by stealth 945
 Had from his wakeful custody purloined
 The guarded gold; so eagerly the Fiend

O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough,
 dense, or rare,
 With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his
 way,
 And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps,
 or flies. 950
 At length a universal hubbub wild
 Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,
 Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his
 ear
 With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies
 Undaunted, to meet there whatever
 Power 955
 Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss
 Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
 Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
 Bordering on light; when straight behold
 the throne
 Of *Chaos*, and his dark pavilion spread 960
 Wide on the wasteful Deep! With him en-
 throned
 Sat sable-vested *Night*, eldest of things,
 The consort of his reign; and by them stood
 Orcus and Aides, and the dreaded name 964
 Of Demogorgon; Rumor next, and Chance,
 And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
 And Discord with a thousand various
 mouths.
 To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: —
 “Ye Powers
 And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,
 Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy 970
 With purpose to explore or to disturb
 The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint
 Wandering this darksome desert, as my way
 Lies through your spacious empire up to
 light,
 Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek, 975
 What readiest path leads where your gloomy
 bounds
 Confine with Heaven; or, if some other place,
 From your dominion won, the Ethereal King
 Possesses lately, thither to arrive
 I travel this profound. Direct my course: 980
 Directed, no mean recompense it brings
 To your behoof, if I that region lost,
 All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
 To her original darkness and your sway
 (Which is my present journey), and once
 more 985
 Erect the standard there of ancient Night.
 Yours be the advantage all, mine the re-
 venge!”

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
 With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
 Answered: — “I know thee, stranger, who
 thou art — 990
 That mighty leading Angel, who of late

¹ wings.

² Sandbanks and quick-sands off the Mediterranean coast of Africa.

³ The Arimasians were a one-eyed people of Scythia, according to legend, who fought constantly with griffins for the gold guarded by these monsters.

Made head against Heaven's King, though
overthrown.

I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frighted Deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout, 995
Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-
gates

Poured out by millions her victorious bands,
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to defend, 1000
Encroached on still through our intestine
broils

Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first,
Hell,

Your dungeon, stretching far and wide be-
neath;

Now lately Heaven and Earth, another
world

Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden
chain 1005

To that side Heaven from whence your le-
gions fell!

If that way be your walk, you have not
far;

So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed;
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."

He ceased; and Satan staid not to reply, 1010
But, glad that now his sea should find a
shore,

With fresh alacrity and force renewed
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round 1015
Environed, wins his way; harder beset
And more endangered than when Argo
passed¹

Through Bosphorus betwixt the jostling rocks,²
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
Charybdis, and by the other Whirlpool
steered. 1020

So he with difficulty and labor hard
Moved on. With difficulty and labor he;
But, he once passed, soon after, when Man
fell,

Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain,
Following his track (such was the will of
Heaven) 1025

Paved after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,
From Hell continued, reaching the utmost
Orb³

¹ An allusion to Jason and his search in the Argo for the golden fleece.

² The Sympleglades, which moved together to crush boats sailing between.

³ The outermost of the ten concentric spheres surrounding the earth.

Of this frail World; by which the Spirits
perverse 1030

With easy intercourse pass to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good Angels guard by special grace.

But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of
Heaven 1035

Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first
begins

Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,
As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
With tumult less and with less hostile
din; 1040

That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds¹
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle
torn;

Or in the emptier waste, resembling air, 1045
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living sapphire, once his native seat, 1050
And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent World, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous re-
venge,

Accurst, and in a cursèd hour, he hies. 1055

AREOPAGITICA

1644

Milton turned to pamphleteering in the service of his countrymen on his return from Italy. Recognizing as he says that there were three forms of liberty, ecclesiastical, domestic, and civil, he directed his efforts toward securing the first through the reform of the Church. Then occurred his unfortunate marriage, which brought to his mind strongly the necessity of the second. He published a series of pamphlets on the subject of divorce in which he discussed the relation of the individual and the State, arguing for large freedom of the former in matters concerning his own welfare and happiness. On account of the disturbed condition of the times the control of the press by the authorities had lapsed. In August, 1644, however, Parliament ordered that a new ordinance providing for the censorship of the press by the Stationers' Company should be prepared and directed that search should be made for the author and publisher of the divorce tracts. Upon this Milton published on November 24, 1644, his famous *Areopagitica*. It is in the form of an oration

¹ makes for.

such as might have been delivered by one of the orators of Athens to the Areopagus, a representative assembly. In it Milton puts forth the arguments for individual freedom of opinion and expression, which are the basis of the liberal faith and the democratic theory of government. It will be noticed that Milton shows great and implicit faith in the individual, a faith which was stimulated by the example of his fellow citizens of London during the early, trying days of the Civil War, when the capture of the city was threatened by the royal forces. Later experience with the difficulties of government led Milton to modify his views of democracy and individual liberty. The *Areopagitica*, however, is a splendid monument to the English nation at a great moment of its history, and to Milton's own genius. The intellectual power of the argument and the sonorous style, formed on the model of the classical writers, mark it as one of the greatest examples of English prose.

The *Areopagitica* is edited by J. W. Hales, published by the Clarendon Press. Another edition by Laura E. Lockwood is published in the Riverside College Classics by Houghton Mifflin Company.

A SPEECH FOR THE LIBERTY OF UNLICENSED PRINTING, TO THE PARLIAMENT OF ENGLAND

This is true liberty, when free-born men,
Having to advise the public, may speak free,
Which he who can, and will, deserves high praise;
Who neither can nor will, may hold his peace;
What can be juster in a State than this?

EURIPIDES, *The Suppliants*.

They who to states and governors of the Commonwealth direct their speech, High Court of Parliament, or, wanting such access in a private condition, write that which they foresee may advance the public good; I suppose them, as at the beginning of no mean endeavor, not a little altered¹ and moved inwardly in their minds: some with doubt of what will be the success;² others with fear of what will be the censure;³ some with hope, others with confidence of what they have to speak. And me perhaps each of these dispositions, as the subject was whereon I entered, may have at other times variously affected; and likely might in these foremost expressions now also disclose which of them swayed most, but that the very attempt of this address thus made, and the thought of whom it hath recourse to, hath got the power within me to a passion, far more welcome than incidental to a preface.

Which though I stay not⁴ to confess, ere any ask, I shall be blameless, if it be no other than the joy and gratulation which it brings to all who wish and promote their

country's liberty; whereof this whole discourse proposed will be a certain testimony, if not a trophy. For this is not the liberty which we can hope, that no grievance ever should arise in the Commonwealth — that let no man in this world expect; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply considered, and speedily reformed, then is the utmost bound of civil liberty attained, that wise men look for. To which, if I now manifest by the very sound of this which I shall utter, that we are already in good part arrived, and yet from such a steep disadvantage of tyranny and superstition grounded into our principles as was beyond the manhood of a Roman recovery;¹ it will be attributed first, as is most due, to the strong assistance of God our deliverer, next to your faithful guidance and undaunted wisdom, Lords and Commons of England.

Neither is it, in God's esteem, the diminution of his glory, when honorable things are spoken of good men and worthy magistrates; which if I now first should begin to do, after so fair a progress of your laudable deeds, and such a long obligation upon the whole realm to² your indefatigable virtues, I might be justly reckoned among the tardiest and the unwillingest of them that praise ye.

Nevertheless, there being three principal things, without which all praising is but courtship and flattery: first, when that only is praised which is solidly worth praise; next, when greatest likelihoods are brought that such things are truly and really in those persons to whom they are ascribed; the other, when he who praises, by showing that such his actual persuasion is of whom he writes, can demonstrate that he flatters not; the former two of these I have heretofore endeavored, rescuing the employment from him³ who went about to impair your merits with a trivial and malignant encomium; the latter, as belonging chiefly to mine own acquittal, that whom I so extolled I did not flatter, hath been reserved opportunely to this occasion. For he who freely magnifies what hath been nobly done, and fears not to declare as freely what might be done better, gives ye the best covenant of his fidelity; and that his loyalest affection and his hope waits on your proceedings. His highest praising is not flattery, and his plainest advice is a kind

¹ Rome failed to recover from conditions under the Emperors no worse than those under the Stuarts from which the English had just recovered.

² for.

³ Joseph Hall (1574–1656), Bishop of Exeter and later of Norwich, a loyal Churchman, who wrote, at the request of Laud, in 1640, *Episcopacy by Divine Right Asserted*.

¹ disturbed.
³ opinion.

² outcome.
⁴ hasten.

of praising; for though I should affirm and hold by argument, that it would fare better with truth, with learning, and the Commonwealth, if one of your published orders, which I should name, were called in; yet at the same time it could not but much redound to the lustre of your mild and equal government, whenas private persons are hereby animated to think ye better pleased with public advice, than other statists¹ have been delighted heretofore with public flattery. And men will then see what difference there is between the magnanimity of a triennial² Parliament, and that jealous haughtiness of prelates and Cabin Counsellors³ that usurped of late, whenas they shall observe ye in the midst of your victories and successes more gently brooking written exceptions against a voted order than other courts, which had produced nothing worth memory but the weak ostentation of wealth, would have endured the least signified dislike at any sudden proclamation.

If I should thus far presume upon the meek demeanor of your civil and gentle greatness, Lords and Commons, as what your published order hath directly said, that to gainsay, I might defend myself with ease, if any should accuse me of being new or insolent, did they but know how much better I find ye esteem it to imitate the old and elegant humanity of Greece, than the barbaric pride of a Hunnish and Norwegian stateliness. And out of those ages, to whose polite wisdom and letters we owe that we are not yet Goths and Jutlanders, I could name him⁴ who from his private house wrote that discourse to the Parliament of Athens, that persuades them to change the form of democracy which was then established. Such honor was done in those days to men who professed the study of wisdom and eloquence, not only in their own country, but in other lands, that cities and seignories heard them gladly, and with great respect, if they had aught in public to admonish the state. Thus did Dion⁵ Prusæus, a stranger and a private orator, counsel the Rhodians against a former edict; and I abound with other like examples, which to set here would be superfluous. But if from the industry of a life wholly dedicated to studious labors, and those natural endowments haply not the worst for two and fifty

degrees of northern latitude,⁶ so much must be derogated, as to count me not equal to any of those who had this privilege, I would obtain to be thought not so inferior, as yourselves are superior to the most of them who received their counsel; and how far you excel them, be assured, Lords and Commons, there can no greater testimony appear, than when your prudent spirit acknowledges and obeys the voice of reason from what quarter soever it be heard speaking; and renders ye as willing to repeal any act of your own setting forth, as any set forth by your predecessors.

If ye be thus resolved, as it were injury to think ye were not, I know not what should withhold me from presenting ye with a fit instance wherein to show both that love of truth which ye eminently profess, and that uprightness of your judgment which is not wont to be partial to yourselves; by judging over again that Order which ye have ordained "to regulate Printing: that no book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth printed, unless the same be first approved and licensed by such," or at least one of such as shall be thereto appointed. For that part which preserves justly every man's copy⁷ to himself, or provides for the poor, I touch not, only wish they be not made pretences to abuse and persecute honest and painful⁸ men, who offend not in either of these particulars. But that other clause of Licensing Books, which we thought had died with his⁹ brother quadragesimal¹⁰ and matrimonial¹¹ when the prelates expired,¹² I shall now attend with such a homily, as shall lay before ye, first the inventors of it, to be those whom ye will be loth to own; next what is to be thought in general of reading, whatever sort the books be; and that this Order avails nothing to the suppressing of scandalous, seditious, and libellous books, which were mainly intended to be suppressed. Last, that it will be primely to the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of truth, not only by the disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindering and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made both in religious and civil wisdom.

¹ Milton's opinion was that a cold climate is unfavorable to literary production.

² copyright. ³ painstaking. ⁴ its.

⁵ Lenten; referring to the observance of fast days during Lent.

⁶ Milton considered marriage a civil contract, entirely outside the church's jurisdiction.

⁷ The bill for the Exclusion of Bishops from Parliament, passed February 5, 1642.

¹ statesmen.

² An act providing that Parliament should meet at least once every three years was passed February 15, 1641.

³ A group of the King's favorites known, at that time, as the Cabinet Council.

⁴ Isocrates.

⁵ Called Chrysostomus (the golden-tongued) because of his eloquence; born at Prusa in Bithynia about 56 B.C.

I deny not but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors. For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labors of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence,¹ the breath of reason itself, slays an immortality rather than a life. But lest I should be condemned of introducing licence, while I oppose licensing, I refuse not the pains to be so much historical, as will serve to show what hath been done by ancient and famous commonwealths against this disorder, till the very time that this project of licensing crept out of the Inquisition,² was caught up by our prelates, and hath caught some of our presbyters.³

In Athens, where books and wits were ever busier than in any other part of Greece, I find but only two sorts of writings which the

magistrate cared to take notice of; those either blasphemous and atheistical, or libellous. Thus the books of Protagoras¹ were by the judges of Areopagus commanded to be burnt, and himself banished the territory for a discourse begun with his confessing not to know "whether there were gods, or whether not." And against defaming, it was agreed that none should be traduced by name, as was the manner of *Vetus Comœdia*,² whereby we may guess how they censured libelling; and this course was quick³ enough, as Cicero writes,⁴ to quell both the desperate wits of other atheists, and the open way of defaming, as the event showed. Of other sects and opinions, though tending to voluptuousness, and the denying of divine Providence, they took no heed. Therefore we do not read that either Epicurus, or that libertine school of Cyrene,⁵ or what the Cynic impudence⁶ uttered, was ever questioned by the laws. Neither is it recorded that the writings of those old comedians were suppressed, though the acting of them were forbid; and that Plato commended the reading of Aristophanes, the loosest of them all, to his royal scholar Dionysius,⁷ is commonly known, and may be excused, if holy Chrysostom,⁸ as is reported, nightly studied so much the same author, and had the art to cleanse a scurrilous vehemence into the style of a rousing sermon.

That other leading city of Greece, Lacedæmon, considering that Lycurgus their law-giver was so addicted to elegant learning, as to have been the first that brought out of Ionia the scattered works of Homer, and sent the poet Thales⁹ from Crete to prepare and mollify the Spartan surliness with his smooth songs and odes, the better to plant among them law and civility, it is to be wondered how museless and unbookish they were, minding nought but the feats of war. There needed no licensing of books among them, for they disliked all but their own

¹ Protagoras (c. 490 B.C.) of Thrace, one of the first sophists and teachers of rhetoric.

² Classic Greek comedy, in which at first the comedians were licensed by law to make personal attacks.

³ powerful.

⁴ In *De Natura Deorum*, I, 23.

⁵ Aristippus (435?-399? B.C.) founded a school of philosophy at Cyrene which taught that pleasure was the highest good.

⁶ Antisthenes (b. 444 B.C.) founded the Cynic school at Athens which held that virtue, which consisted in a return to a state of nature, was the highest good.

⁷ Dionysius the elder (430?-367 B.C.), Tyrant of Syracuse.

⁸ John (347-407 A.D.), called Chrysostom (golden-tongued) on account of his eloquence, was Archbishop of Constantinople.

⁹ Thales, native of Crete, founded the second of the musical schools of Sparta.

¹ To the four elements known to the senses, Earth, Flood, Air, Fire, Aristotle added a fifth, ether, extending from the heaven of fixed stars to the moon.

² From its early history, the Church of Rome encouraged a close supervision of all activities. At the Council of Toulouse in 1229 the Inquisition was organized.

³ Presbyterian elders, now in power, who were sponsoring this act.

laconic apothegms, and took a slight occasion to chase Archilochus¹ out of their city, perhaps for composing in a higher strain than their own soldierly ballads and roundels could reach to; or if it were for his broad verses, they were not therein so cautious, but they were as dissolute in their promiscuous conversing;² whence Euripides affirms, in *Andromache*, that their women were all unchaste. Thus much may give us light after³ what sort of books were prohibited among the Greeks.

The Romans also, for many ages trained up only to a military roughness, resembling most of the Lacedæmonian guise, knew of learning little but what their Twelve Tables,⁴ and the Pontific College with their augurs and flamens⁵ taught them in religion and law; so unacquainted with other learning, that when Carneades and Critolaus,⁶ with the Stoic Diogenes coming ambassadors to Rome, took thereby occasion to give the city a taste of their philosophy, they were suspected for seducers by no less a man than Cato the Censor, who moved it in the Senate to dismiss them speedily, and to banish all such Attic babblers out of Italy. But Scipio and others of the noblest senators withstood him and his old Sabine austerity; honored and admired the men; and the censor himself at last, in his old age, fell to the study of that whereof before he was so scrupulous. And yet at the same time, Nævius and Plautus, the first Latin comedians, had filled the city with all the borrowed scenes of Menander and Philemon.

Then began to be considered there also what was to be done to libellous books and authors; for Nævius was quickly cast into prison for his unbridled pen, and released by the tribunes upon his recantation; we read also that libels were burnt, and the makers punished by Augustus. The like severity, no doubt, was used, if aught were impiously written against their esteemed gods. Except in these two points, how the world went in books, the magistrate kept no reckoning. And therefore Lucretius⁷ without impeachment verifies his Epicurism to Memmius,

¹ Archilochus (c. 714–676 B.C.) one of the earliest lyric poets of Ionia.

² conviviality. ³ as to.

⁴ Laws of Rome, engraved on bronze about 450 B.C., and studied in the schools until the time of Cicero.

⁵ Under the direction of the Pontific College, the principal college of priests in Rome, were the flamens, priests devoted to the service of some particular deity, and the augurs, priests who foretold future events.

⁶ To protest against a fine imposed on the Athenians for the destruction of Oropus.

⁷ In *De Rerum Natura*, a poem exalting Epicureanism and freedom from superstition.

and had the honor to be set forth the second time by Cicero, so great a father of the commonwealth; although himself disputes¹ against that opinion in his own writings. Nor was the satirical sharpness or naked plainness of Lucilius, or Catullus, or Flaccus, by any order prohibited.

And for matters of state, the story² of Titus Livius, though it extolled that part which Pompey held, was not therefore suppressed by Octavius Cæsar of the other faction. But that Naso³ was by him banished in his old age, for the wanton poems of his youth, was but a mere covert of state over some secret cause; and besides, the books were neither banished nor called in. From hence we shall meet with little else but tyranny in the Roman empire, that we may not marvel, if not so often bad as good books were silenced. I shall therefore deem to have been large enough, in producing what among the ancients was punishable to write, save only which, all other arguments were free to treat on.

By this time the emperors were become Christians,⁴ whose discipline in this point I do not find to have been more severe than what was formerly in practice. The books of those whom they took to be grand heretics were examined, refuted, and condemned in the general councils; and not till then were prohibited, or burnt, by authority of the emperor. As for the writings of heathen authors, unless they were plain invectives against Christianity, as those of Porphyrius⁵ and Proclus,⁶ they met with no interdiction that can be cited, till about the year 400, in a Carthaginian Council, wherein bishops themselves were forbid to read the books of Gentiles, but heresies they might read: while others long before them, on the contrary, scrupled more the books of heretics than of Gentiles. And that the primitive councils and bishops were wont only to declare what books were not commendable, passing no further, but leaving it to each one's conscience to read or to lay by, till after the year 800, is observed already by Padre Paolo,⁷ the

¹ In *De Natura Deorum*.

² history.

³ Publius Ovidius Naso (43 B.C.–18 A.D.), the poet, known as Ovid, exiled from Rome in 8 A.D. for secret cause.

⁴ With Constantine, who issued the edict of toleration in 313.

⁵ *Against the Christians* by Porphyrius (233?–304?) was burned by order of the Emperor Theodosius in 435.

⁶ Proclus (411–495), like Porphyrius, one of the Neo-Platonists.

⁷ Padre Paolo (1552–1623), the name taken as a Servite monk by Pietro Sarpi. His *History of the Council of Trent* was published by Nathaniel Brent in London, 1620.

great unmasker of the Trentine Council.¹ After which time the Popes of Rome, engrossing what they pleased of political rule into their own hands, extended their dominion over men's eyes, as they had before over their judgments, burning and prohibiting to be read what they fancied not; yet sparing in their censures, and the books not many which they so dealt with; till Martin V.² by his bull, not only prohibited, but was the first that excommunicated the reading of heretical books; for about that time Wyclif and Huss growing terrible, were they who first drove the Papal Court to a stricter policy of prohibiting. Which course Leo X.³ and his successors followed, until the Council of Trent and the Spanish Inquisition, engendering together, brought forth, or perfected those catalogues, and expurging indexes, that rake through the entrails of many an old good author, with a violation worse than any could be offered to his tomb.

Nor did they stay in matters heretical, but any subject that was not to their palate, they either condemned in a Prohibition,³ or had it straight into the new Purgatory of an Index.⁴ To fill up the measure of encroachment, their last invention was to ordain that no book, pamphlet, or paper should be printed (as if St. Peter had bequeathed them the keys of the press also out of Paradise) unless it were approved and licensed under the hands of two or three glutton friars. For example:

Let the Chancellor Cini be pleased to see if in this present work be contained aught that may withstand the printing. Vincent Rabbatta, Vicar of Florence.

I have seen this present work, and find nothing athwart the Catholic faith and good manners: in witness whereof I have given, &c.

Nicolo Cini, Chancellor of Florence.

Attending the precedent relation, it is allowed that this present work⁵ of Davanzati may be printed.

Vincent Rabatta, &c.

It may be printed, July 15.

Friar Simon Mompei d'Amelia, Chancellor of the Holy Office in Florence.

Sure they have a conceit, if he of the bottomless pit had not long since broke prison, that this quadruple exorcism would bar him

down. I fear their next design will be to get into their custody the licensing of that which they say Claudius intended, but went not through with. Vouchsafe to see another of their forms, the Roman stamp:

Imprimatur,¹ If it seem good to the reverend Master of the Holy Palace, Belcastro, Vicegerent.

Imprimatur,

Friar Nicolo Rodolphi, Master of the Holy Palace.

Sometimes five Imprimaturs are seen together, dialogues, in the piazza of one title-page, complimenting and ducking each to other with their shaven reverences, whether the author, who stands by in perplexity at the foot of his epistle, shall to the press or to the sponge. These are the pretty responsories, these are the dear antiphonies, that so bewitched of late our prelates and their chaplains, with the goodly echo they made; and besotted us to the gay imitation of a lordly Imprimatur, one from Lambeth House,² another from the west end of Paul's;³ so apishly Romanising, that the word of command still was set down in Latin; as if the learned grammatical pen that wrote it would cast no ink without Latin; or perhaps, as they thought, because no vulgar⁴ tongue was worthy to express the pure conceit⁵ of an Imprimatur; but rather, as I hope, for that our English, the language of men, ever famous and foremost in the achievements of liberty, will not easily find servile letters enow to spell such a dictatory presumption English.

And thus ye have the inventors and the original of book-licensing ripped up and drawn as lineally as any pedigree. We have it not, that can be heard of, from any ancient state, or polity, or church, nor by any statute left us by our ancestors elder or later; nor from the modern custom of any reformed city or church abroad; but from the most anti-christian council and the most tyrannous inquisition that ever inquired.

Till then books were ever as freely admitted into the world as any other birth; the issue of the brain was no more stifled than the issue of the womb; no envious Juno⁶ sat

1 "Let it be printed." The official licenser's mark.

2 The London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

3 The palace of the Bishop of London, near St. Paul's Church.

4 other than Latin, the language of the learned.

5 idea, thought.

6 Alcmena was about to give birth to Heracles, son of Zeus, when jealous Hera attempted to hinder the birth for seven days, so that Eurystheus might be born first and win the powers that Jove had promised to the first descendant of Perseus.

1 The Council of Trent (1545-63).

2 Martin V. was Pope from 1417 to 1431.

3 The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, the list of books a Roman Catholic is forbidden to read.

4 The *Index Expurgatorius*, containing passages to be expurgated from books otherwise permitted to be read.

5 This was *Dello Scismo d'Inghilterra*, a history of the Church in England from 1501 to the death of Henry VIII.

cross-legged over the nativity of any man's intellectual offspring; but if it proved a monster, who denies but that it was justly burnt, or sunk into the sea. But that a book, in worse condition than a peccant soul, should be to stand before a jury ere it be born to the world, and undergo yet in darkness the judgment of Radamanth¹ and his colleagues, ere it can pass the ferry backward into light, was never heard before, till that mysterious iniquity,² provoked and troubled at the first entrance of reformation, sought out new limbos and new hells wherein they might include our books also within the number of their damned. And this was the rare morsel so officiously snatched up, and so ill-favoredly imitated by our inquisitorial³ bishops, and the attendant minorities,⁴ their chaplains. That ye like not now these most certain authors of this licensing order, and that all sinister intention was far distant from your thoughts, when ye were importuned the passing it, all men who know the integrity of your actions, and how ye honor truth, will clear ye readily.

But some will say, what though the inventors were bad, the thing for all that may be good. It may so; yet if that thing be no such deep invention, but obvious and easy for any man to light on, and yet best and wisest commonwealths through all ages and occasions have forborne to use it, and falsest seducers and oppressors of men were the first who took it up, and to no other purpose but to obstruct and hinder the first approach of reformation; I am of those who believe, it will be a harder alchymy than Lullius⁵ ever knew, to sublimate any good use out of such an invention. Yet this only is what I request to gain from this reason, that it may be held a dangerous and suspicious fruit, as certainly it deserves, for the tree that bore it, until I can dissect one by one the properties it has. But I have first to finish, as was propounded, what is to be thought in general of reading books, whatever sort they be, and whether be more the benefit or the harm that thence proceeds?

Not to insist upon the examples of Moses, Daniel, and Paul, who were skilful in all the

learning of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Greeks, which could not probably be without reading their books of all sorts; in Paul especially, who thought it no defilement to insert into Holy Scripture the sentences of three Greek poets, and one of them a tragedian; the question was notwithstanding sometimes controverted among the primitive doctors, but with great odds on that side which affirmed it both lawful and profitable, as was then evidently perceived, when Julian the Apostate and subtlest enemy to our faith, made a decree forbidding Christians the study of heathen learning; for, said he, they wound us with our own weapons, and with our own arts and sciences they overcome us. And, indeed, the Christians were put so to their shifts by this crafty means, and so much in danger to decline into all ignorance, that the two Apollinarii were fain, as a man may say, to coin all the seven liberal sciences¹ out of the Bible, reducing it into divers forms of orations, poems, dialogues, even to the calculating of a new Christian grammar. But, saith the historian Socrates,² the providence of God provided better than the industry of Apollinarius and his son, by taking away that illiterate law with the life of him who devised it.

So great an injury they then held it to be deprived of Hellenic learning; and thought it a persecution more undermining, and secretly decaying the Church, than the open cruelty of Decius or Diocletian. And perhaps it was the same politic drift that the devil whipped St. Jerome in a Lenten dream, for reading Cicero; or else it was a phantasm bred by the fever which had then seized him. For had an angel been his discipliner, unless it were for dwelling too much upon Ciceronianisms, and had chastised the reading, not the vanity, it had been plainly partial; first to correct him for grave Cicero, and not for scurril Plautus, whom he confesses to have been reading, not long before; next to correct him only, and let so many more ancient fathers wax old in those pleasant and florid studies without the lash of such a tutoring apparition; insomuch that Basil³ teaches how some good use may be made of Margites, a sportful poem, not now extant, writ by Homer; and why not then of Morgante,⁴ an

¹ Son of Zeus and Europa, one of the judges of the lower world.

² The woman of Revelations xvii, identified with the Papacy by sixteenth century Church reformers.

³ Of an inquisitorial tendency.

⁴ Friars Minor, or Franciscans. The position of the chaplains Milton makes analogous to that of the Minorities in the Inquisition.

⁵ Raymond Lully (1235?-1315), inventor of a mechanical system of logic by which an answer to any question could be obtained.

¹ These, the requirements of a liberal education, were then the Trivium: Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric; and the Quadrivium: Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, Music.

² Socrates Scholasticus (385?-440?), whose *History* embraces the period from 306 to 439.

³ Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, 370-79.

⁴ *Morgante Maggiore*, by Luigi Pulci (1431-87) a satirical romance, burlesquing romantic poetry.

Italian romance much to the same purpose?

But if it be agreed we shall be tried by visions, there is a vision recorded by Eusebius,¹ far ancients than this tale of Jerome to the nun Eustochium, and, besides, has nothing of a fever in it. Dionysius² Alexandrinus was, about the year 240, a person of great name in the church for piety and learning, who had wont to avail himself much against heretics by being conversant in their books; until a certain presbyter laid it scrupulously to his conscience, how he durst venture himself among those defiling volumes. The worthy man, loth to give offence,³ fell into a new debate with himself what was to be thought; when suddenly a vision sent from God (it is his own epistle that so avers it) confirmed him in these words: "Read any books whatever come to thy hands, for thou art sufficient both to judge aright, and to examine each matter." To this revelation he assented the sooner, as he confesses, because it was answerable to that of the Apostle to the Thessalonians: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

And he might have added another remarkable saying of the same author: "To the pure, all things are pure"; not only meats and drinks, but all kind of knowledge whether of good or evil; the knowledge cannot defile, nor consequently the books, if the will and conscience be not defiled. For books are as meats and viands are; some of good, some of evil substance; and yet God in that unapocryphal vision, said without exception, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat,"⁴ leaving the choice to each man's discretion. Wholesome meats to a vitiated stomach differ little or nothing from unwholesome; and best books to a naughty mind are not unapplicable to occasions of evil. Bad meats will scarce breed good nourishment in the healthiest concoction;⁵ but herein the difference is of bad books, that they to a discreet and judicious reader serve in many respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn, and to illustrate.

Whereof what better witness can ye expect I should produce, than one of your own now sitting in Parliament, the chief of learned men reputed in this land, Mr. Selden;⁶ whose volume of natural and national laws proves, not only by great authorities brought together, but by exquisite reasons and theorems

¹ Bishop of Cæsarea, 314-340, sometimes called the *Father of Ecclesiastical History*.

² Bishop of Alexandria, 247-265.

³ be the cause of sin.

⁴ Acts x, 9-16.

⁵ digestion.

⁶ John Selden (1584-1654), lawyer and member of Parliament.

almost mathematically demonstrative, that all opinions, yea errors, known, read, and collated, are of main service and assistance toward the speedy attainment of what is truest.

I conceive, therefore, that when God did enlarge the universal diet of man's body, saving ever the rules of temperance, he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dieting and repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his own leading capacity. How great a virtue is temperance, how much of moment through the whole life of man! Yet God commits the managing so great a trust, without particular law or prescription, wholly to the demeanor¹ of every grown man. And, therefore, when he himself tabled the Jews from heaven, that omer,² which was every man's daily portion of manna, is computed to have been more than might have well sufficed the heartiest feeder thrice as many meals. For those actions which enter into a man, rather than issue out of him, and therefore defile not, God uses not to captivate under a perpetual childhood of prescription, but trusts him with the gift of reason to be his own chooser; there were but little work left for preaching, if law and compulsion should grow so fast upon those things which heretofore were governed only by exhortation. Solomon informs us, that much reading is a weariness to the flesh; but neither he nor other inspired author tells us that such or such reading is unlawful, yet certainly had God thought good to limit us herein, it had been much more expedient to have told us what was unlawful, than what was wearisome.

As for the burning of those Ephesian books by St. Paul's converts; 'tis replied the books were magic, the Syriac so renders them. It was a private act, a voluntary act, and leaves us to a voluntary imitation: the men in remorse burnt those books which were their own; the magistrate by this example is not appointed;³ these men practised the books, another might perhaps have read them in some sort usefully.

Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed upon Psyche as an incessant

¹ management.

³ determined.

² Cf. Exodus xvi, 16-36.

labor to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixed. It was from out the rind of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evil as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world. And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say, of knowing good by evil.

As, therefore, the state of man now is; what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world; we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue, therefore, which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental¹ whiteness; which was the reason why our sage and serious poet Spenser, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus² or Aquinas, describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon,³ and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know, and yet abstain.

Since, therefore, the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with less danger, scout into the regions of sin and falsity, than by reading all manner of tractates and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read.

But of the harm that may result hence, three kinds are usually reckoned. First, is feared the infection that may spread; but then all human learning and controversy in religious points must remove out of the world, yea the Bible itself; for that oftentimes

¹ superficial. Hair, mustaches, finger nails, were referred to in this period as excrement.

² John Duns Scotus (1265?-1308), a Franciscan, and Thomas Aquinas (1225?-74), famous teachers and theologians, and founders of the opposing schools of Scotists and Thomists.

³ Cf. Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, II, vii.

relates blasphemy not nicely, it describes the carnal sense of wicked men not unelegantly, it brings in holiest men passionately murmuring against Providence through all the arguments of Epicurus; in other great disputes it answers dubiously and darkly to the common reader; and asks a Talmudist what ails the modesty of his marginal Keri,¹ that Moses and all the prophets cannot persuade him to pronounce the textual Chetiv.² For these causes we all know the Bible itself put by the Papist into the first rank of prohibited books. The ancientest fathers must be next removed, as Clement of Alexandria,³ and that Eusebian book of Evangelic preparation⁴ transmitting our ears through a hoard of heathenist obscenities to receive the Gospel. Who finds not that Irenæus, Epiphanius,⁵ Jerome, and others discover more heresies than they well confute, and that oft for heresy which is the truer opinion?

Nor boots it to say for these, and all the heathen writers of greatest infection, if it must be thought so, with whom is bound up the life of human learning, that they writ in an unknown tongue, so long as we are sure those languages are known as well to the worst of men, who are both most able and most diligent to instil the poison they suck, first into the courts of princes, acquainting them with the choicest delights, and criticisms⁶ of sin. As perhaps did that Petronius whom Nero called his Arbiter, the master of his revels; and the notorious ribald of Arezzo,⁷ dreaded and yet dear to the Italian courtiers. I name not him for posterity's sake, whom Henry VIII named in merriment his Vicar of hell.⁸ By which compendious way all the contagion that foreign books can infuse, will find a passage to the people far easier and shorter than an Indian voyage, though it could be sailed either by the north of Cathay eastward, or of Canada westward, while our Spanish licensing gags the English press never so severely.

¹ That which is read.

² That which is written. In the Talmud, if a passage seemed unfit to read, a gloss (Keri) was written in the margin.

³ Clement of Alexandria (about 200 A.D.), in order to convert the Greeks, described in his *Horitory Address to the Greeks* the obscenity of many of their religious practices.

⁴ *The Preparatio Evangelica*, a collection of quotations from pagan philosophers.

⁵ Irenæus (140?-202?), Bishop of Lyons, and Epiphanius (315?-403), Bishop of Constantia, both wrote works describing and confuting heresies.

⁶ subtle points.

⁷ Pietro Aretino (1492-1557), banished from Arezzo and later from Rome for his satires.

⁸ The allusion here is uncertain, possibly to Wolsey or to Thomas Cromwell.

But, on the other side, that infection which is from books of controversy in religion, is more doubtful and dangerous to the learned than to the ignorant; and yet those books must be permitted untouched by the licenser. It will be hard to instance where any ignorant man hath been ever seduced by papistical book in English, unless it were commended and expounded to him by some of that clergy; and indeed all such tractates, whether false or true, are as the prophecy of Isaiah was to the eunuch,¹ "not to be understood without a guide." But of our priests and doctors how many have been corrupted by studying the comments of Jesuits and Sorbonists,² and how fast they could transfuse that corruption into the people, our experience is both late and sad. It is not forgot, since the acute and distinct Arminius³ was perverted merely by the perusing of a nameless⁴ discourse written at Delft, which at first he took in hand to confute.

Seeing, therefore, that those books, and those in great abundance, which are likeliest to taint both life and doctrine, cannot be suppressed without the fall of learning, and of all ability in disputation; and that these books of either sort are most and soonest catching to the learned, from whom to the common people whatever is heretical or dissolute may quickly be conveyed; and that evil manners are as perfectly learned without books a thousand other ways which cannot be stopped; and evil doctrine not with books can propagate, except a teacher guide, which he might also do without writing, and so beyond prohibiting; I am not able to unfold, how this cautelous⁵ enterprise of licensing can be exempted from the number of vain and impossible attempts. And he who were pleasantly disposed, could not well avoid to liken it to the exploit of that gallant man, who thought to pound up the crows by shutting his park gate.

Besides another inconvenience, if learned men be the first receivers out of books and dispreaders both of vice and error, how shall the licensers themselves be confided in, unless we can confer upon them, or they assume to themselves above all others in the land, the grace of infallibility and uncorruptedness? And again, if it be true, that a wise man, like a good refiner, can gather gold out of the

drossiest volume, and that a fool will be a fool with the best book, yea or without book, there is no reason that we should deprive a wise man of any advantage to his wisdom, while we seek to restrain from a fool that which being restrained will be no hindrance to his folly. For if there should be so much exactness always used to keep that from him which is unfit for his reading, we should, in the judgment of Aristotle not only, but of Solomon and of our Saviour, not vouchsafe him good precepts, and by consequence not willingly admit him to good books; as being certain that a wise man will make better use of an idle pamphlet, than a fool will do of sacred Scripture.

'Tis next alleged we must not expose ourselves to temptations without necessity, and, next to that, not employ our time in vain things. To both these objections one answer will serve, out of the grounds already laid; that to all men such books are not temptations nor vanities, but useful drugs and materials wherewith to temper, and compose effective and strong medicines, which man's life cannot want.⁷ The rest, as children and childish men, who have not the art to qualify² and prepare these working minerals, well may be exhorted to forbear, but hindered forcibly they cannot be by all the licensing that sainted Inquisition could ever yet contrive. Which is what I promised to deliver next: that this order of licensing conduces nothing to the end for which it was framed; and hath almost prevented me by being clear already, while thus much hath been explaining. See the ingenuity³ of Truth, who, when she gets a free and willing hand, opens herself faster than the pace of method and discourse⁴ can overtake her.

It was the task which I began with, to show that no nation, or well instituted state, if they valued books at all, did ever use this way of licensing; and it might be answered, that this is a piece of prudence lately discovered. To which I return, that as it was a thing slight and obvious to think on, so if it had been difficult to find out, there wanted not among them long since who suggested such a course; which they not following, leave us a pattern of their judgment that it was not the not knowing, but the not approving, which was the cause of their not using it.

Plato, a man of high authority indeed, but least of all for his commonwealth, in the book

¹ Acts viii, 28-35.

² Students at the school founded in 1252 by Robert de Sorbon especially for poor students.

³ Arminius (1560-1609), a Dutch theologian, who, during his studies to defend the doctrine of predestination, lost his own conviction, and finally rejected it.

⁴ anonymous.

⁵ deceitful.

¹ be without.

³ ingenuously.

² moderate the strength of.

⁴ reasoning.

of his laws, which no city ever yet received, fed his fancy with making many edicts to his airy burgomasters, which they who otherwise admire him, wish had been rather buried and excused in the genial cups of an Academic¹ night sitting. By which laws² he seems to tolerate no kind of learning, but by unalterable decree, consisting most of practical traditions, to the attainment whereof a library of smaller bulk than his own dialogues would be abundant. And there also enacts, that no poet should so much as read to any private man what he had written, until the judges and law-keepers had seen it, and allowed it; but that Plato meant this law peculiarly to that commonwealth which he had imagined, and to no other, is evident. Why was he not else a lawgiver to himself, but a transgressor, and to be expelled by his own magistrates; both for the wanton epigrams and dialogues which he made, and his perpetual reading of Sophron³ Mimus, and Aristophanes, books of grossest infamy; and also for commending the latter of them, though he were the malicious libeller of his chief friends, to be read by the tyrant Dionysius, who had little need of such trash to spend his time on? But that he knew this licensing of poems had reference and dependence to many other provisos there set down in his fancied republic, which in this world could have no place; and so neither he himself, nor any magistrate, or city ever imitated that course, which, taken apart from those other collateral injunctions, must needs be vain and fruitless.

For if they fell upon⁴ one kind of strictness, unless their care were equal to regulate all other things of like aptness to corrupt the mind, that single endeavor they knew would be but a fond labor; to shut and fortify one gate against corruption, and be necessitated to leave others round about wide open. If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No music must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric.⁵ There must be licensing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth, but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such Plato was pro-

vided of. It will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers? The windows also, and the balconies must be thought on; these are shrewd¹ books, with dangerous frontispieces, set to sale; who shall prohibit them, shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors² to inquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebeck reads even to the ballatry,³ and the gamut of every municipal fiddler, for these are the countryman's Arcadias,⁴ and his Monte Mayors.⁵

Next, what more national corruption, for which England hears ill⁶ abroad, than household gluttony? Who shall be the rectors of our daily rioting? And what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those houses where drunkenness is sold and harbored? Our garments also should be referred to the licensing of some more sober workmasters, to see them cut into a less wanton garb. Who shall regulate all the mixed conversation⁷ of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this country? Who shall still appoint what shall be discoursed, what presumed, and no further? Lastly, who shall forbid and separate all idle resort,⁸ all evil company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be least hurtful, how least enticing, herein consists the grave and governing wisdom of a state.

To sequester out of the world into Atlantic⁹ and Utopian¹⁰ polities, which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evil, in the midst whereof God hath placed us unavoidably. Nor is it Plato's licensing of books will do this, which necessarily pulls along with it so many other kinds of licensing, as will make us all both ridiculous and weary, and yet frustrate; but those unwritten, or at least unconstraining, laws of virtuous education, religious and civil nurture,

¹ mischievous.

² An odious word in England since Laud's visitors were sent out to oversee the morals of the people.

³ ballad poetry.

⁴ Sidney's *Arcadia*, published 1590.

⁵ Jorge de Montemayor (1520?-61), whose *Diana Enamorada* started the vogue of the prose pastoral romance.

⁶ is reputed ill.

⁷ conviviality.

⁸ those frequenting a certain place.

⁹ Bacon's *New Atlantis*, the story of an ideal commonwealth.

¹⁰ Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*.

¹ Plato founded the famous Academy at Athens in 387 B.C.

² Plato: *Laws*, vii, 808-12.

³ Of Syracuse (5th century B.C.), whose *Mimes*, or mimic dialogues, are supposed to have been very coarse and lively, and were studied by Plato to give animation to his own dialogues.

⁴ decided on.

⁵ severe.

which Plato there mentions¹ as the bonds and ligaments of the commonwealth, the pillars and the sustainers of every written statute; these they be which will bear chief sway in such matters as these, when all licensing will be easily eluded. Impunity and remissness, for certain, are the bane of a commonwealth; but here the great art lies, to discern in what the law is to bid restraint and punishment, and in what things persuasion only is to work. If every action which is good or evil in man at ripe years, were to be under pittance and prescription and compulsion, what were virtue but a name, what praise could be then due to well-doing, what gramercy² to be sober, just, or continent?

Many there be that complain of divine Providence for suffering Adam to transgress. Foolish tongues! when God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had been else a mere artificial Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions.³ We ourselves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force; God, therefore, left him free, set before him a provoking⁴ object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did he create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly tempered are the very ingredients of virtue? They are not skilful considerers of human things, who imagine to remove sin by removing the matter of sin; for, besides that it is a huge heap increasing under the very act of diminishing, though some part of it may for a time be withdrawn from some persons, it cannot from all, in such a universal thing as books are; and when this is done, yet the sin remains entire. Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure, he has yet one jewel left, ye cannot bereave him of his covetousness. Banish all objects of lust, shut up all youth into the severest discipline that can be exercised in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chaste, that came not thither so: such great care and wisdom is required to the right managing of this point.

Suppose we could expel sin by this means; look how much we thus expel of sin, so much we expel of virtue: for the matter of them both is the same; remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This justifies the high providence of God, who, though he commands us temperance, justice, continence, yet pours out before us, even to a pro-

fuseness, all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety. Why should we then affect a rigor contrary to the manner of God and of nature, by abridging or scanting those means, which books freely permitted are, both to the trial of virtue, and the exercise of truth?

It would be better done, to learn that the law must needs be frivolous,¹ which goes to restrain things, uncertainly and yet equally working to good and to evil. And were I the chooser, a dram of well doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil doing. For God sure esteems the growth and completing of one virtuous person, more than the restraint of ten vicious. And albeit whatever thing we hear or see, sitting, walking, travelling, or conversing, may be fitly called our book, and is of the same effect that writings are; yet grant the thing to be prohibited were only books, it appears that this order hitherto is far insufficient to the end which it intends. Do we not see, not once or oftener, but weekly that continued court-libel² against the Parliament and City, printed, as the wet sheets can witness, and dispersed among us, for all that licensing can do? Yet this is the prime service a man would think, wherein this Order should give proof of itself. If it were executed, you'll say. But certain, if execution be remiss or blindfold now, and in this particular, what will it be hereafter and in other books?

If then the Order shall not be vain and frustrate, behold a new labor, Lords and Commons; ye must repeal and proscribe all scandalous and unlicensed books already printed and divulged;³ after ye have drawn them up into a list, that all may know which are condemned, and which not; and ordain that no foreign books be delivered out of custody, till they have been read over. This office will require the whole time of not a few overseers, and those no vulgar men. There be also books which are partly useful and excellent, partly culpable and pernicious; this work will ask as many more officials, to make expurgations and expunctions, that the commonwealth of learning be not damned.⁴ In fine, when the multitude of books increase upon their hands, ye must be fain to catalogue all those printers who are found fre-

¹ unimportant.

² Refers to the *Mercurius Aulicus*, a weekly newspaper published by Sir John Birkenhead (1616-79) virulently Royalist in policy, and attacking Parliament in every possible way.

³ published.

⁴ injured.

¹ Plato, *Republic*, IV, 424; *Laws*, I, 643.

² thanks.

³ puppet shows.

⁴ provocative.

quently offending, and forbid the importation of their whole suspected typography. In a word, that this your Order may be exact, and not deficient, ye must reform it perfectly according to the model of Trent and Seville, which I know ye abhor to do.

Yet, though ye should condescend ¹ to this, which God forbid, the Order still would be but fruitless and defective to that end whereto ye meant it. If to prevent sects and schisms, who is so unread or so uncatechized in story, that hath not heard of many sects refusing books as a hindrance, and preserving their doctrine unmixed for many ages, only by unwritten traditions? The Christian faith, for that was once a schism, is not unknown to have spread all over Asia, ere any Gospel or Epistle was seen in writing. If the amendment of manners be aimed at, look into Italy and Spain, whether those places be one scruple the better, the honester, the wiser, the chaster, since all the inquisitional rigor that hath been executed upon books.

Another reason, whereby to make it plain that this Order will miss the end it seeks, consider by the quality which ought to be in every licenser. It cannot be denied but that he who is made judge to sit upon the birth or death of books, whether they may be wafted into this world or not, had need to be a man above the common measure, both studious, learned, and judicious; there may be else no mean mistakes in the censure of what is passable or not; which is also no mean injury. If he be of such worth as behoves him, there cannot be a more tedious and unpleasing journey-work,² a greater loss of time levied upon his head, than to be made the perpetual reader of unchosen books and pamphlets, oftentimes huge volumes. There is no book that is acceptable unless at certain seasons; but to be enjoined the reading of that at all times, and in a hand scarce legible, whereof three pages would not down at any time in the fairest print, is an imposition which I cannot believe how he that values time and his own studies, or is but of a sensible³ nostril, should be able to endure.

In this one thing I crave leave of the present licensers to be pardoned for so thinking; who doubtless took this office up, looking on it through their obedience to the Parliament, whose command perhaps made all things seem easy and unlaborious to them; but that this short trial hath wearied them out already, their own expressions and excuses to

them who make so many journeys to solicit their license, are testimony enough. Seeing, therefore, those who now possess the employment, by all evident signs wish themselves well rid of it, and that no man of worth, none that is not a plain unthrift of his own hours is ever likely to succeed them, except he mean to put himself to the salary of a press corrector, we may easily foresee what kind of licensers we are to expect hereafter, either ignorant, imperious, and remiss, or basely pecuniary. This is what I had to show, wherein this Order cannot conduce to that end, whereof it bears the intention.

I lastly proceed from the no good it can do, to the manifest hurt it causes, in being first the greatest discouragement and affront that can be offered to learning and to learned men.

It was the complaint and lamentation of prelates, upon every least breath of a motion to remove pluralities, and distribute more equally church revenues, that then all learning would be for ever dashed and discouraged. But as for that opinion, I never found cause to think that the tenth part of learning stood or fell with the clergy; nor could I ever but hold it for a sordid and unworthy speech of any churchman who had a competency left him. If, therefore, ye be loth to dishearten heartily and discontent, not the mercenary crew of false pretenders to learning, but the free and ingenuous sort of such as evidently were born to study, and love learning for itself, not for lucre, or any other end, but the service of God and of truth, and perhaps that lasting fame and perpetuity of praise which God and good men have consented shall be the reward of those whose published labors advance the good of mankind; then know, that so far to distrust the judgment and the honesty of one who hath but a common repute in learning, and never yet offended, as not to count him fit to print his mind, without a tutor and examiner, lest he should drop a schism, or something of corruption, is the greatest displeasure and indignity to a free and knowing spirit that can be put upon him.

What advantage is it to be a man over it is to be a boy at school, if we have only escaped the ferula to come under the fescue¹ of an Imprimatur; if serious and elaborate writings, as if they were no more than the theme of a grammar-lad under his pedagogue, must not be uttered without the cursory eyes of a

¹ agree.
³ sensitive.

² work of a journeyman.

¹ A twig; it came to mean the pointer used in pointing out letters to children learning to read.

temporizing and extemporizing licenser? He who is not trusted with his own actions, his drift not being known to be evil, and standing to ¹ the hazard of law and penalty, has no great argument to think himself reputed, in the commonwealth wherein he was born, for other than a fool or a foreigner. When a man writes to the world, he summons up all his reason and deliberation to assist him; he searches, meditates, is industrious, and likely ¹⁰ consults and confers with his judicious friends; after all which done he takes himself to be informed in what he writes, as well as any that writ before him; if in this the most consummate act of his fidelity and ripeness, no years, no industry, no former proof of his abilities can bring him to that state of maturity, as not to be still mistrusted and suspected, unless he carry all his considerate ² diligence, all his midnight watchings, and expense of Palladian oil, ³ to the hasty view of an unleisured licenser, perhaps much his younger, perhaps far his inferior in judgment, perhaps one who never knew the labor of book-writing; and if he be not repulsed, ²⁵ and slighted, must appear in print like a puny ⁴ with his guardian, and his censor's hand on the back of his title to be his bail and surety, that he is no idiot, or seducer; it cannot be but a dishonor and derogation to the author, to the book, to the privilege and dignity of learning.

And what if the author shall be one so copious of fancy, as to have many things well worth the adding, come into his mind after ³⁵ licensing, while the book is yet under the press, which not seldom happens to the best and diligentest writers; and that perhaps a dozen times in one book. The printer dares not go beyond his licensed copy; so often then must the author trudge to his leave-giver, that those his new insertions may be viewed; and many a jaunt will be made, ere that licenser, for it must be the same man, can either be found, or found at leisure; meanwhile, either the press must stand still, which is no small damage, or the author lose his accuratest thoughts, and send the book forth worse than he had made it, which to a diligent writer is the greatest melancholy ⁵ and vexation that can befall.

And how can a man teach with authority, which is the life of teaching, how can he be a

doctor in his book as he ought to be, or else had better be silent, whenas all he teaches, all he delivers, is but under the tuition, under the correction of his patriarchal licenser to blot or alter what precisely accords not with the hide-bound humor which he calls his judgment? When every acute reader upon the first sight of a pedantic license, will be ready with these like words to ding ¹ the book a quoit's distance from him; "I hate a pupil teacher, I endure not an instructor that comes to me under the wardship of an over-seeing fist."² I know nothing of the licenser, but that I have his own hand here for his arrogance; who shall warrant me his judgment?"

"The State, sir," replies the stationer,³ but has a quick return: "The State shall be my governors, but not my critics; they may be mistaken in the choice of a licenser, as easily as this licenser may be mistaken in an author; this ⁴ is some common stuff"; and he might add from Sir Francis Bacon, "That such authorized books are but the language of the times." For though a licenser should happen to be judicious more than ordinary, which will be a great jeopardy of the next succession,⁵ yet his very office, and his commission enjoins him to let pass nothing but what is vulgarly ⁶ received already.

Nay, which is more lamentable, if the work of any deceased author, though never so famous in his lifetime, and even to this day, come to their hands for licence to be printed, or reprinted; if there be found in his book one sentence of a venturous edge, uttered in the height of zeal, and who knows whether it might not be the dictate of a divine spirit, yet not suiting with every low, decrepit humor of their own, though it were Knox himself, the reformer of a kingdom, that spake it, they will not pardon him their dash; ⁷ the sense of that great man shall to all posterity be lost, for the fearfulness, or the presumptuous rashness, of a perfunctory licenser. And to what an author this violence hath been lately done, and in what book of greatest consequence to be faithfully published, I could now instance, but shall forbear till a more convenient season.

Yet if these things be not resented seriously and timely by them who have the remedy in their power, but that such iron-

¹ taking the chance of.

² careful.

³ Pallas, to whom the olive was sacred, taught mortals the means of extracting the oil. The phrase implies wisdom in both words, since Pallas was the goddess of wisdom, and oil the light by which men read.

⁴ a minor.

⁵ humiliation.

¹ Not an English word; probably, to throw.

² handwriting.

³ publisher, bookseller.

⁴ "particular book" implied.

⁵ Implying that if one licenser is very good the succeeding one will appear very bad in comparison.

⁶ commonly, generally.

⁷ line drawn through censored material.

moulds¹ as these shall have authority to gnaw out the choicest periods of exquisite books, and to commit such a treacherous fraud against the orphan remainders of worthiest men after death, the more sorrow will belong to that hapless race of men, whose misfortune it is to have understanding. Henceforth, let no man care to learn, or care to be more than worldly wise; for certainly in higher matters to be ignorant and slothful, to be a common steadfast dunce, will be the only pleasant life, and only in request.

And as it is a particular disesteem of every knowing person alive, and most injurious to the written labors and monuments of the dead, so to me it seems an undervaluing and vilifying of the whole nation. I cannot set so light by all the invention, the art, the wit, the grave and solid judgment which is in England, as that it can be comprehended in any twenty capacities how good soever; much less that it should not pass except their superintendence be over it, except it be sifted and strained with their strainers; that it should be uncurrent without their manual stamp. Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopolised and traded in by tickets² and statutes and standards. We must not think to make a staple commodity of all the knowledge in the land, to mark and license it like our broadcloth and our woolpacks. What is it but a servitude like that imposed by the Philistines,³ not to be allowed the sharpening of our own axes and coulters,⁴ but we must repair from all quarters to twenty licensing forges.

Had any one written and divulged erroneous things and scandalous to honest life, misusing and forfeiting the esteem had of his reason among men; if, after conviction, this only censure were adjudged him, that he should never henceforth write, but what were first examined by an appointed officer, whose hand should be annexed to pass his credit for him, that now he might be safely read; it could not be apprehended less than a disgraceful punishment.

Whence, to include the whole nation, and those that never yet thus offended, under such a diffident⁵ and suspectful prohibition, may plainly be understood what a disparagement it is. So much the more, whenas debtors and delinquents may walk abroad without a keeper, but unoffensive books⁵⁵

must not stir forth without a visible jailor in their title. Nor is it to the common people less than a reproach; for if we be so jealous¹ over them, as that we dare not trust them with an English pamphlet, what do we but censure them for a giddy, vicious, and ungrounded people; in such a sick and weak state of faith and discretion, as to be able to take nothing down but through the pipe² of a licenser. That this is care or love of them, we cannot pretend, whenas in those popish places where the laity are most hated and despised, the same strictness is used over them. Wisdom we cannot call it, because it stops but one breach of licence, nor that neither; whenas those corruptions which it seeks to prevent, break in faster at other doors which cannot be shut.

And in conclusion, it reflects to the disrepute of our ministers also, of whose labors we should hope better, and of the proficiency which their flock reaps by them, than that after all this light of the Gospel which is, and is to be, and all this continual preaching, they should be still frequented with such an unprincipled, unedified, and laic rabble, as that the whiff of every new pamphlet should stagger them out of their catechism and Christian walking. This may have much reason to discourage the ministers, when such a low conceit³ is had of all their exhortations, and the benefiting of their hearers, as that they are not thought fit to be turned loose to three sheets of paper without a licenser; that all the sermons, all the lectures preached, printed, vented in such numbers, and such volumes, as have now well-nigh made all other books unsaleable, should not be armor enough against one single enchiridion, without the castle of St. Angelo of an Imprimatur.⁴

And lest some should persuade ye, Lords and Commons, that these arguments of learned men's discouragement at this your Order are mere flourishes, and not real, I could recount what I have seen and heard in other countries, where this kind of inquisition tyrannises; when I have sat among their learned men, for that honor I had, and been counted happy to be born in such a place of philosophic freedom, as they supposed England was, while themselves did nothing but bemoan the servile condition into which learning amongst them was brought; that

¹ suspicious. ² tube for swallowing medicine.

³ conception, idea.

⁴ The phrase means: without the protection of a Papal license. The Castle of Saint Angelo, built in 136 A.D. by Hadrian, was used until 217 as the tomb of the Emperors. From 1389 to 1404 it was held by the Popes as a stronghold; in Milton's time it was the Papal prison.

¹ rust.

² special permissions.

³ See I Sam XIII, 19-22.

⁴ plowshares.

⁵ distrustful.

this was it which had damped the glory of Italian wits; that nothing had been there written now these many years but flattery and fustian. There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo,¹ grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought. And though I knew that England then² was groaning loudest under the prelatical yoke, nevertheless I took it as a pledge of future happiness, that other nations were so persuaded of her liberty.

Yet was it beyond my hope that those worthies were then breathing in her air, who should be her leaders to such a deliverance, as shall never be forgotten by any revolution of time that this world hath to finish. When that was once begun, it was as little in my fear, that what words of complaint I heard among learned men of other parts uttered against the Inquisition, the same I should hear by as learned men at home uttered in time of Parliament against an order of licensing; and that so generally, that when I had disclosed myself a companion of their discontent, I might say, if without envy,³ that he whom an honest quæstorship had endeared to the Sicilians, was not more by them importuned against Verres,⁴ than the favorable opinion which I had among many who honor ye, and are known and respected by ye, loaded me with entreaties and persuasions, that I would not despair to lay together that which just reason should bring into my mind, toward the removal of an undeserved thraldom upon learning.

That this is not, therefore, the disburdening of a particular fancy, but the common grievance of all those who had prepared their minds and studies above the vulgar pitch to advance truth in others, and from others to entertain it, thus much may satisfy. And in their name I shall for neither friend nor foe conceal what the general murmur is; that if it come to inquisitioning again and licensing, and that we are so timorous of ourselves, and so suspicious of all men, as to fear each book, and the shaking of every leaf, before we know what the contents are; if some who

but of late were little better than silenced from preaching, shall come now to silence us from reading, except what they please, it cannot be guessed what is intended by some but a second tyranny over learning; and will soon put it out of controversy, that bishops and presbyters are the same to us both name and thing.

That those evils of prelaty which before from five or six and twenty sees were distributively charged upon the whole people, will now light wholly upon learning, is not obscure to us; whenas now the pastor of a small unlearned parish, on the sudden, shall be exalted archbishop over a large diocese of books, and yet not remove, but keep his other cure too, a mystical¹ pluralist. He who but of late cried down the sole ordination of every novice bachelor of art, and denied sole jurisdiction over the simplest parishioner, shall now at home in his private chair assume both these over worthiest and excellentest books, and ablest authors that write them. This is not, ye covenants and protestations² that we have made! This is not to put down prelaty; this is but to chop³ an episcopacy; this is but to translate the palace metropolitan from one kind of dominion into another; this is but an old canonical sleight of commuting our penance.⁴ To startle thus betimes at a mere unlicensed pamphlet will after a while be afraid of every conventicle,⁵ and a while after will make a conventicle of every Christian meeting.

But I am certain that a state governed by the rules of justice and fortitude, or a church built and founded upon the rock of faith and true knowledge, cannot be so pusillanimous. While things are yet not constituted⁶ in religion, that freedom of writing should be restrained by a discipline imitated from the prelates, and learnt by them from the Inquisition, to shut us up all again into the breast of a licenser, must needs give cause of doubt and discouragement to all learned and religious men. Who cannot but discern the fineness of this politic drift, and who are

¹ mysterious, or, perhaps, inexplicable.

² Including the National Covenant, signed in Scotland in 1638, for the purpose of recovering the purity and liberty of the Gospel; the Solemn League and Covenant, between the English and Scottish nations, of 1643-44; the Protestation of the House of Commons in 1641, in which it was vowed "to maintain . . . the true Reformed Protestant Religion . . . against all Popery and Popish innovations."

³ exchange one episcopacy for another.

⁴ exchanging one penance for another, permitted by the Canon Law.

⁵ In Milton's time the significance of this word had been narrowed down from "meeting" to a meeting prohibited by law, of Nonconformists or Dissenters.

⁶ settled.

¹ Galileo (1564-1642). Milton saw Galileo when he was living in retirement after 1632, when he had published his *Dialogo dei due Massimi Sistemi del Mondo* in defiance of an edict by which he was distrained from writing anything in accordance with the Copernican theory, as a result of which he was forced to recant before the Inquisition.

² In 1638, under the domination of Laud.

³ without exciting malice.

⁴ C. Cornelius Verres, against whose bad government in Sicily Cicero directed his seven famous orations.

the contrivers: that while bishops were to be baited down,¹ then all the presses might be open; it was the people's birthright and privilege in time of Parliament, it was the breaking forth of light?

But now, the bishops abrogated and voided out of the Church, as if our reformation sought no more, but to make room for others into their seats under another name, the episcopal arts begin to bud again;² the cruse of truth must run no more oil;³ liberty of printing must be enthralled again under a prelatical commission of twenty,⁴ the privilege of the people nullified; and, which is worse, the freedom of learning must groan again, and to her old fetters: all this the Parliament yet sitting. Although their own late arguments and defences against the prelates might remember⁵ them, that this obstructing violence meets for the most part with an event utterly opposite to the end which it drives at; instead of suppressing sects and schisms, it raises them and invests them with a reputation: "The punishing of wits enhances their authority," saith the Viscount St. Albans; "and a forbidden writing is thought to be a certain spark of truth that flies up in the faces of them who seek to tread it out."⁶

This Order, therefore, may prove a nursing mother to sects, but I shall easily show how it will be a stepdame to Truth; and first by disenabling us to⁷ the maintenance of what is known already.

Well knows he who uses to consider, that our faith and knowledge thrives by exercise, as well as our limbs and complexion.⁸ Truth is compared in Scripture to a steaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. A man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believe things only because his pastor says so, or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy. There is not any burden that some would gladlier post off to another, than the charge and care of their religion. There be, who knows not that there be, of Protestants and professors⁹

who live and die in as arrant an implicit faith,¹ as any lay Papist of Loreto.²

A wealthy man addicted to his pleasure and to his profits, finds religion to be a traffic so entangled, and of so many piddling accounts, that of all mysteries³ he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. What should he do? Fain he would have the name to be religious; fain he would bear up with his neighbors in that. What does he, therefore, but resolves to give over toiling, and to find himself out some factor, to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; some Divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion; esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is become a dividual⁴ movable, and goes and comes near him, according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep, rises, is saluted, and after the malmsey, or some well-spiced brewage, and better breakfasted than he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem, his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion.

Another sort there be, who, when they hear that all things shall be ordered, all things regulated and settled, nothing written but what passes through the custom-house of certain publicans⁵ that have the tonnage and poundage⁶ of all free-spoken truth, will straight give themselves up into your hands, make 'em and cut 'em out what religion ye please; there be delights, there be recreations and jolly pastimes that will fetch the day about from sun to sun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightful dream. What need they torture their heads with that which others have taken so strictly, and so unalterably into their own purveying? These are the fruits which a dull ease and cessation

1 An expression taken from the sport of bear-baiting, popular in Elizabeth's time.

2 See Num. xvii, 6-8.

3 See I Kings xvii, 9-15.

4 Under the decree of the Star Chamber 1637, the number of printers in London was limited to twenty.

5 remind.

6 From *An Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England*.

7 in regard to.

8 state of physical health.

9 Protestants, or those who then professed religion openly, as opposed to Roman Catholics.

1 A faith resting on the authority of another, as opposed to a revealed belief.

2 The *Casa Santa* or Holy House, believed to be the birthplace of the Virgin Mary, carried by angels to Loreto.

3 arts, occupations.

4 that may be separated from him.

5 tax collectors.

6 the laying of duties on exports and imports.

of our knowledge will bring forth among the people. How goodly, and how to be wished, were such an obedient unanimity as this, what a fine conformity would it starch us all into! Doubtless a staunch and solid piece of framework, as any January could freeze together.

Nor much better will be the consequence even among the clergy themselves; it is no new thing never heard of before, for a parochial minister, who has his reward, and is at his Hercules pillars¹ in a warm benefice, to be easily inclinable, if he have nothing else that may rouse up his studies, to finish his circuit² in an English concordance and a topic folio,³ the gatherings and savings of a sober graduateship,⁴ a harmony⁵ and a catena,⁶ treading the constant round of certain common doctrinal heads, attended with their uses, motives, marks, and means; out of which, as out of an alphabet or sol-fa,⁷ by forming and transforming, joining and disjoining variously a little bookcraft, and two hours' meditation, might furnish him unspeakably to the performance of more than a weekly charge of sermoning; not to reckon up the infinite helps of interlinearies, breviaries, synopses, and other loitering gear.⁸

But as for the multitude of sermons ready printed and piled up, on every text that is not difficult, our London trading Saint Thomas⁹ in his vestry,¹⁰ and add to boot Saint Martin and Saint Hugh, have not within their hallowed limits more vendible ware of all sorts ready made; so that penury he never need fear of pulpit provision, having where so plenteously to refresh his magazine. But if his rear and flanks be not impaled,¹¹ if his back door be not secured by the rigid licenser, but that a bold book may now and then issue forth, and give the assault to some of his old collections in their trenches; it will concern him then to keep waking, to stand in watch, to set good guards and sentinels about his received opinions, to walk the round and counter-round with his fellow inspectors, fearing lest any of his flock be seduced, who also then would be better instructed, better

exercised and disciplined. And God fend that the fear of this diligence, which must then be used, do not make us affect the laziness of a licensing church.

For if we be sure we are in the right, and do not hold the truth guiltily, which becomes not, if we ourselves condemn not our own weak and frivolous teaching, and the people for an untaught and irreligious, gadding rout, what can be more fair, than when a man judicious, learned, and of a conscience, for aught we know, as good as theirs that taught us what we know, shall not privily from house to house, which is more dangerous, but openly by writing, publish to the world what his opinion is, what his reasons, and wherefore that which is now thought cannot be sound? Christ urged it as wherewith to justify himself, that he preached in public;¹ yet writing is more public than preaching; and more easy to refutation, if need be, there being so many whose business and profession merely it is, to be the champions of truth; which if they neglect, what can be imputed but their sloth, or inability?

Thus much we are hindered and disinured by this course of licensing toward the true knowledge of what we seem to know. For how much it hurts and hinders the licensers themselves in the calling of their ministry, more than any secular employment, if they will discharge that office as they ought, so that of necessity they must neglect either the one duty or the other, I insist not, because it is a particular,² but leave it to their own conscience, how they will decide it there.

There is yet behind of what I purposed to lay open, the incredible loss and detriment that this plot of licensing puts us to. More than if some enemy at sea should stop up all our havens, and ports, and creeks, it hinders and retards the importation of our richest merchandise, truth; nay, it was first established and put in practice by Antichristian malice and mystery,³ on set purpose to extinguish, if it were possible, the light of reformation, and to settle⁴ falsehood; little differing from that policy wherewith the Turk upholds his Alcoran, by the prohibition of printing. 'Tis not denied, but gladly confessed, we are to send our thanks and vows to Heaven, louder than most of nations, for that great measure of truth which we enjoy,

¹ The rocks on either side of the Strait of Gibraltar, i.e., the far limits of the ancient world, came to signify the highest ambition or desire.

² the course of his studies.

³ a notebook.

⁴ course at the University.

⁵ A work showing how the four gospels agree in their accounts of the life of Christ.

⁶ A series of extracts from the writings of the Fathers, arranged in the form of a commentary on the Scriptures.

⁷ scale, gamut.

⁸ help to idleness.

⁹ Saint Thomas, Saint Martin, and Saint Hugh refer to shopping districts of London.

¹⁰ clothes-press.

¹¹ fenced in with stakes.

¹ See John XVIII. 19-21.

² personal matter of concern.

³ underhand practices.

⁴ establish.

especially in those main points between us and the Pope, with his appurtenances the prelates; but he who thinks we are to pitch our tent here, and have attained the utmost prospect of reformation, that the mortal glass wherein we contemplate can show us, till we come to beatific vision,¹ that man by this very opinion declares, that he is yet far short of truth.

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on; but when he ascended, and his apostles after him were laid asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who, as that story goes of the Egyptian Typhon² with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful³ search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do, till her Master's second coming; he shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature⁴ of loveliness and perfection. Suffer not these licensing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity, forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do our obsequies to the torn body of our martyred saint.

We boast our light; but if we look not wisely on the sun itself, it smites us into darkness. Who can discern those planets that are oft combust,⁵ and those stars of brightest magnitude that rise and set with the sun, until the opposite motion of their orbs bring them to such a place in the firmament, where they may be seen evening or morning. The light which we have gained, was given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge. It is not the unfrocking of a

priest, the unmitring of a bishop, and the removing him from off the Presbyterian shoulders that will make us a happy nation; no, if other things as great in the Church, and in the rule of life both economical and political, be not looked into and reformed, we have looked so long upon the blaze that Zwinglius and Calvin hath beaconed up to us, that we are stark blind.

There be who perpetually complain of schisms and sects, and make it such a calamity that any man dissents from their maxims. 'Tis their own pride and ignorance which causes the disturbing, who neither will hear with meekness, nor can convince, yet all must be suppressed which is not found in their syntagma.¹ They are the troublers, they are the dividers of unity, who neglect and permit not others to unite those dis severed pieces which are yet wanting to the body of Truth. To be still searching² what we know not, by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it (for all her body is homogeneous and proportional),³ this is the golden rule⁴ in theology as well as in arithmetic, and makes up the best harmony in a church; not the forced and outward union of cold and neutral and inwardly divided minds.

Lords and Commoners of England consider what nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors; a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse,⁵ not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of learning in her deepest sciences have been so ancient, and so eminent among us, that writers of good antiquity, and ablest judgment have been persuaded that even the school of Pythagoras, and the Persian wisdom, took beginning from the old philosophy of this island. And that wise and civil Roman, Julius Agricola,⁶ who governed once here for Cæsar, preferred the natural wits of Britain, before the labored studies of the French. Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal Transylvanian sends out yearly from as far as the mountainous borders of Russia, and beyond the Hercynian wilderness, not their

¹ the face of God.

² Typhon, the god of Evil; Osiris, the god of Good. While Osiris was on a journey round the earth, Typhon had a beautiful chest made to the measurements of Osiris, and on the latter's return, offered to present it to the person who could lie down in it. It fitted nobody but Osiris, and when he was in it, Typhon and his conspirators locked him in, and threw the chest into the river. Isis, the sister and wife of Osiris, sought for the chest, and after finding it, did it reverence. But Typhon managed to seize it in her absence, and tore the body into fourteen pieces and scattered them abroad.

³ anxious.

⁴ form, shape.

⁵ When within 8° 30' of the sun, a planet is said to be combust, or its influence destroyed. Venus, Mercury, and Vulcan are those most often combust.

¹ handbooks.

² investigating.

³ All the parts of the same kind, and each proportional to the whole.

⁴ the rule of three.

⁵ to reason.

⁶ Consul in Britain from 78 to 85, not under Cæsar, but under Emperors Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. He is said by Tacitus to have provided "a liberal education for the sons of their chieftains, preferring the natural genius of the Britains to the attainments of the Gauls."

youth, but their staid men, to learn our language and our theologic arts.

Yet that which is above all this, the favor and the love of Heaven, we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending ¹ towards us. Why else was this nation chosen before any other, that out of her as out of Sion should be proclaimed and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of reformation to all Europe? And had it not been the obstinate perverseness of our prelates against the divine and admirable spirit of Wyclif, to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Huss and Jerome, no, nor the name of Luther, or of Calvin, had been ever known; the glory of reforming all our neighbors had been completely ours. But now, as our obdurate clergy have with violence demeaned ² the matter, we are become hitherto the latest and backwardest scholars, of whom God offered to have made us the teachers.

Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, even to the reforming of reformation itself. What does he then but reveal himself to his servants, and, as his manner is, first to his Englishmen; I say, as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast city, a city of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates ³ and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching reformation; others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and conviction.

What could a man require more from a nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful laborers, to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, of sages, and of worthies? We reckon more than five months ⁵⁵ yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks,

had we but eyes to lift up; the fields are white already. Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up in this city. What some lament of, we rather should rejoice at, should rather praise this pious forwardness among men, to reassume the ill-deputed care of their religion into their own hands again. A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity might win all these diligences to join and unite in one general and brotherly search after truth; could we but forego this prelatical tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men. I doubt not, if some great and worthy stranger should come among us, wise to discern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it, ²⁵ observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reasonings in the pursuance of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as Pyrrhus did, admiring the Roman docility and courage. "If such were my Epirots, I would not despair the greatest design that could be attempted to make a church or kingdom happy."

Yet these are the men cried out against for schismatics and sectaries; as if, while the temple ¹ of the Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there should be a sort ² of irrational men who could not consider there ⁴⁰ must be many schisms and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the house of God can be built. And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world; neither can every piece of the building be of one form; nay rather the perfection consists in this, that out of many moderate ³ varieties and brotherly dissimilarities that are not vastly disproportional, ⁵⁰ arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure.

Let us, therefore, be more considerate builders, more wise in spiritual architecture, when great reformation is expected. For now the time seems come, wherein Moses, the great prophet, may sit in heaven rejoice-

¹ favorably inclined.
³ breast-plates.

² conducted.

¹ See II Chron. II, 5-9.
³ not greatly different.

² company.

ing to see that memorable and glorious wish¹ of his fulfilled, when not only our seventy elders but all the Lord's people, are become prophets. No marvel then though some men, and some good men too, perhaps, but young in goodness, as Joshua then was, envy them.² They fret, and out of their own weakness are in agony, lest those divisions and subdivisions will undo us. The adversary³ again applauds, and waits the hour, when they have branched themselves out, saith he, small enough into parties and partitions, then will be our time. Fool! he sees not the firm root, out of which we all grow, though into branches; nor will beware until he see our small divided maniples⁴ cutting through at every angle of his ill-united and unwieldy brigade. And that we are to hope better of all these supposed sects and schisms, and that we shall not need that solicitude, honest perhaps, though over-timorous, of them that vex in this behalf, but shall laugh in the end at those malicious applauders of our differences, I have these reasons to persuade me.

First, when a city shall be as it were besieged and blocked about,⁵ her navigable river infested, inroads and incursions round, defiance and battle oft rumored to be marching up even to her walls and suburb trenches; that then the people, or the greater part, more than at other times, wholly taken up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reformed, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discouraging, even to a rarity and admiration, things not before discoursed or written of, argues at first a singular goodwill, contentedness and confidence in your prudent foresight, and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives itself⁶ to a gallant bravery and well grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was, who, when Rome was nigh besieged by Hannibal, being in the city, bought that piece of ground at no cheap rate whereon Hannibal himself encamped his own regiment.

Next, it is a lively and cheerful presage of our happy success and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rational faculties, and those in the acutest and the pertest⁷ operations of wit and sub-

tlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is; so when the cheerfulness of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has, not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversy and new invention, it betokens us, not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatal decay, but casting off the old and wrinkled skin of corruption to outlive these pangs, and wax young again, entering the glorious ways of truth and prosperous virtue, destined to become great and honorable in these latter ages.

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; I methinks I see her as an eagle mewing² her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise³ of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

What should ye do then, should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this city; should ye set an oligarchy of twenty engrossers⁴ over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel? Believe it, Lords and Commons, they who counsel ye to such a suppressing, do as good as bid ye suppress yourselves; and I will soon show how.

If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer than your own mild and free and humane government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased⁵ us, liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarefied and enlightened our spirits like the influence⁶ of heaven; this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged, and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now less capable, less knowing, less eagerly pursuing of the truth, unless

1 See Judges xvi, 13, 14, 19, and 20.

2 Perhaps "renewing by the process of moulting."

3 company, concert.

4 Those who buy in large quantities, in order to control trade; the modern Trust.

5 procured.

6 Referring to the belief of astrologers that the position of the planets affects human destiny.

1 See Num. xi, 24-29.

3 The Church of Rome.

5 The situation of London, in 1642.

6 proceeds.

2 bear them ill will.

4 handfuls.

7 liveliest.

ye first make yourselves, that made us so, less the lovers, less the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formal, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous; as they were from whom ye have freed us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the search and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your own virtue propagated in us; ye cannot suppress that unless ye reinforce an abrogated and merciless law, that fathers may despatch at will their own children.¹ And who shall then stick closest to ye, and excite others? not he who takes up arms for coat and conduct,² and his four nobles³ of Danegelt.⁴ Although I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

What would be best advised, then, if it be found so hurtful and so unequal⁵ to suppress opinions for the newness, or the unsuitableness to a customary acceptance, will not be my task to say; I only shall repeat what I have learned from one of your own honorable number, a right noble and pious lord, who, had he not sacrificed his life and fortunes to the Church and Commonwealth, we had not now missed and bewailed a worthy and undoubted patron of this argument. Ye know him I am sure; yet I for honor's sake, and may it be eternal to him, shall name him the Lord Brook.⁶ He, writing of Episcopacy, and by the way treating of sects and schisms, left ye his vote,⁷ or rather now the last words of his dying charge, which I know will ever be of dear and honored regard with ye, so full of meekness and breathing charity, that next to his last testament, who bequeathed love and peace to his disciples, I cannot call to mind where I have read or heard words more mild and peaceful. He there exhorts us to hear with patience and humility those, however they be miscalled, that desire to live purely, in such a use of God's ordinances,

as the best guidance of their conscience gives them, and to tolerate them, though in some disconformity to ourselves. The book itself will tell us more at large, being published to the world, and dedicated to the Parliament by him who, both for his life and for his death, deserves that what advice he left be not laid by without perusal.

And now the time in special is,¹ by privilege to write and speak what may help to the further discussing of matters in agitation. The temple of Janus² with his two controversial faces might now not unsignificantly be set open. And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter? Her confuting³ is the best and surest suppressing. He who hears what praying there is for light and clearer knowledge to be sent down among us, would think of other matters to be constituted beyond the discipline⁴ of Geneva, framed and fabricated⁵ already to our hands.

Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy and oppose, if it come not first in at their case-ments. What a collusion is this, whenas we are exhorted by the wise man to use diligence, to seek for wisdom as for hidden treasures early and late, that another order shall enjoin us to know nothing but by statute? When a man hath been laboring the hardest labor in the deep mines of knowledge, hath furnished out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reasons as it were a battle⁶ ranged, scattered, and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adversary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and sun, if he please; only that he may try the matter by dint of argument, for his opponents then to sculk, to lay ambushments, to keep a narrow bridge of licensing where the challenger should pass, though it be valor enough in soldiership, is but weakness and cowardice in the wars of Truth. For who knows not that Truth is strong, next to the Almighty; she needs no policies, no stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious; those are the shifts and

¹ A Roman law, not repealed until 318 A.D.

² The tax levied for the clothing and transportation of the army was very unpopular.

³ A noble was an English coin current from the reign of Edward III, value, 6 s. 8 d.

⁴ money paid to buy the Danes off.

⁵ unfair.

⁶ Robert Greville, second Lord Brooke, greatly beloved in England, was general of the Parliamentary forces in the Civil War, and was killed in an attack on the royal forces, March 2, 1643.

⁷ earnest wish.

¹ "fitting" understood.

² Roman god with two faces. The gates of his temple in the Forum were closed in time of peace, open in time of war.

³ disproof.

⁴ the system by which the practices of a church are regulated.

⁵ fabricated.

⁶ army.

the defences that error uses against her power: give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old Proteus¹ did, who spake oracles only when he was caught and bound, but then rather she turns herself into all shapes, except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as Micaiah did before Ahab,² until she be adjured into her own likeness.

Yet is it not impossible that she may have more shapes than one. What else is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein Truth may be on this side, or on the other, without being unlike herself? What but a vain shadow else is the abolition of those ordinances, that hand-writing nailed to the cross; what great purchase³ is this Christian liberty which Paul so often boasts of? His doctrine is, that he who eats, or eats not, regards a day, or regards it not, may do either to the Lord. How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief stronghold of our hypocrisy to be ever judging one another. I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks; the ghost of a linen decency yet haunts us. We stumble and are impatient at the least dividing of one visible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentals; and through our forwardness to suppress, and our backwardness to recover, any enthralled piece of truth out of the gripe of custom, we care not to keep truth separated from truth, which is the fiercest rent and disunion of all. We do not see that while we still affect by all means a rigid external formality, we may as soon fall again into a gross conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of wood, and hay, and stubble forced and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a church than many subdichotomies⁴ of petty schisms.

Not that I can think well of every light separation, or that all in a church is to be expected gold and silver and precious stones: it is not possible for man to sever the wheat from the tares,⁵ the good fish from the other fry; that must be the angels' ministry at the end of mortal things. Yet if all cannot be of one mind, — as who looks they should be? —

¹ The sea-god who tended the flocks of Poseidon. He had the power of assuming any shape to avoid the necessity of prophesying, but when caught and held, would tell truly of the future.

² See I Kings XXII, 1-28.

³ advantage. ⁴ subdivisions.

⁵ See Matt. XIII, 24-30, 37-43.

this doubtless is more wholesome, more prudent, and more Christian, that many be tolerated, rather than all compelled. I mean not tolerated popery¹ and open superstition, which, as it extirpates all religions and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpate; provided first that all charitable and compassionate means be used to win and regain the weak and the misled; that also which is impious or evil absolutely, either against faith or manners,² no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw itself; but those neighboring differences, or rather indifferences, are what I speak of, whether in some point of doctrine or of discipline, which though they may be many, yet need not interrupt the unity of spirit, if we could but find among us the bond of peace.

In the meanwhile, if any one would write, and bring his helpful hand to the slow-moving reformation which we labor under, if truth have spoken to him before others, or but seemed at least to speak, who hath so be-jesuited us that we should trouble that man with asking license to do so worthy a deed? And not consider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not aught more likely to be prohibited than truth itself; whose first appearance to our eyes beared and dimmed with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and unpalatable than many errors, even as the person is of many a great man slight and contemptible to see to. And what do they tell us vainly of new opinions, when this very opinion of theirs, that none must be heard but whom they like, is the worst and newest opinion of all others; and is the chief cause why sects and schisms do so much abound, and true knowledge is kept at distance from us; besides yet a greater danger which is in it. For when God shakes a kingdom with strong and healthful commotions to a general reforming, 'tis not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing; but yet more true it is, that God then raises to his own work men of rare abilities, and more than common industry, not only to look back, and revise what hath been taught heretofore, but to gain further, and go on some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth.

For such is the order of God's enlightening his church, to dispense and deal out by degrees his beam, so as our earthly eyes may best sustain it. Neither is God appointed

¹ Milton's idea of religious toleration never included Catholicism.

² conduct, in a moral sense.

and confined, where and out of what place these his chosen shall be first heard to speak; for he sees not as man sees, chooses not as man chooses, lest we should devote ourselves again to set places, and assemblies, and outward callings of men; planting our faith one while in the old Convocation house,¹ and another while in the Chapel² at Westminster; when all the faith and religion that shall be there canonized,³ is not sufficient without plain conviction and the charity of patient instruction, to supple the least bruise of conscience, to edify the meanest Christian who desires to walk in the Spirit, and not in the letter of human trust, for all the number of voices that can be there made; no, though Harry VII himself there, with all his liege tombs⁴ about him, should lend them voices from the dead, to swell their number.

And if the men be erroneous who appear to be the leading schismatics, what withholds us but our sloth, our self-will, and distrust in the right cause, that we do not give them gentle meetings and gentle dismissions, that we debate not and examine the matter thoroughly with liberal and frequent audience; if not for their sakes, yet for our own? Seeing no man who hath tasted learning, but will confess the many ways of profiting by those who, not contented with stale receipts, are able to manage, and set forth new positions to the world. And were they but as the dust and cinders of our feet, so long as in that notion⁵ they may serve to polish and brighten the armory of Truth, even for that respect they were not utterly to be cast away. But if they be of those whom God hath fitted for the special use of these times with eminent and ample gifts, and those perhaps neither among the priests, nor among the pharisees, and we in the haste of a precipitant zeal shall make no distinction, but resolve to stop their mouths, because we fear they come with new and dangerous opinions, as we commonly forejudge them ere we understand them, no less than woe to us, while thinking thus to defend the Gospel, we are found the persecutors.

There have been not a few since the begin-

ning of this Parliament, both of the Presbytery and others, who by their unlicensed books, to the contempt of an Imprimatur, first broke that triple ice clung about our hearts, and taught the people to see day; I hope that none of those were the persuaders to renew upon us this bondage which they themselves have wrought so much good by contemning. But if neither the check that Moses gave to young Joshua, nor the countermand which our Saviour gave to young John,¹ who was so ready to prohibit those whom he thought unlicensed, be not enough to admonish our elders how unacceptable to God their testy mood of prohibiting is; if neither their own remembrance what evil hath abounded in the church by this let² of licensing, and what good they themselves have begun by transgressing it, be not enough, but that they will persuade, and execute the most Dominican part of the Inquisition over us, and are already with one foot in the stirrup so active at suppressing, it would be no unequal distribution, in the first place, to suppress the suppressors themselves; whom the change of their condition hath puffed up, more than their late experience of harder times hath made wise.

And as for regulating the press, let no man think to have the honor of advising ye better than yourselves have done in that order published next before this, "that no book be printed, unless the printer's and the author's name, or at least the printer's be registered." Those which otherwise come forth, if they be found mischievous and libellous, the fire and the executioner will be the timeliest and the most effectual remedy that man's prevention can use. For this authentic Spanish policy of licensing books, if I have said aught, will prove the most unlicensed book itself within a short while; and was the immediate image of a Star Chamber decree to that purpose made in those very times when that Court did the rest of those her pious works, for which she is now fallen from the stars with Lucifer. Whereby ye may guess what kind of state prudence, what love of the people, what care of religion or good manners there was at the contriving, although with singular hypocrisy it pretended to bind books to their good behavior. And how it got the upper hand of your precedent order so well constituted before, if we may believe those men whose profession gives them cause to inquire most, it may be doubted there was in it the fraud of some old patentees and monopolisers

¹ The assembly of the clergy of the Church of England met in the Chapter House of Westminster Cathedral.

² The Assembly of Divines of the Presbyterian Church, which supplanted the Convocation, met in Henry VII's Chapel.

³ admitted to the canon, or body of ecclesiastical laws.

⁴ Henry VII had buried near him his wife, Elizabeth of York, his mother, Margaret Beaufort, Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots, Prince Henry, Anne of Denmark, and King James I.

⁵ conception.

¹ See Luke IX, 49, 50.

² hindrance.

in the trade of bookselling; who under pretence of the poor in their Company not to be defrauded, and the just retaining of each man his several copy, which God forbid should be gainsaid, brought divers glosing colors to the House, which were indeed but colors, and serving to no end except it be to exercise a superiority over their neighbors; men who do not, therefore, labor in an honest profession to which learning is indebted, that they should be made other men's vassals. Another end is thought was aimed at by some of them in procuring by petition this Order, that having power in their hands, malignant books might the easier scape abroad, as the event shows.

But of these sophisms and elenchs¹ of merchandise I skill not. This I know, that errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almost incident; for what magistrate may not be misinformed, and much the sooner, if liberty of printing be reduced into the power of a few; but to redress willingly and speedily what hath been erred, and in highest authority to esteem a plain advertisement more than others have done a sumptuous bribe, is a virtue, honored Lords and Commons, answerable to your highest actions, and whereof none can participate but greatest and wisest men.

¹ I sophistical arguments.

SAMUEL PEPYS (1633-1703)

The steadily increasing fame of Pepys as author of the famous diary has tended to obscure the fact that he was an able government official, especially as Secretary of the Admiralty during a time when Great Britain's sea-power was being strengthened considerably; that he was a discriminating collector of books and manuscripts, which he left to his college in Cambridge University; and that he was esteemed highly enough as a scholar to be elected president of the Royal Society.

Still, it is for the vivid pictures of the times and his fascinating personality as disclosed in the diary that Pepys is famous. This diary he kept from January 1, 1660, to May 31, 1669, in shorthand. It was not transcribed until 1825, when Lord Braybrooke first published the diary, cut to about half its size by omissions. The extract given below is from this well-known version.

The best edition of the complete diary is H. B. Wheatley's in eight volumes (G. Bell and Sons). Excellent biographical studies of Pepys have been written by Gamaliel Bradford, *The Soul of Samuel Pepys* (Houghton Mifflin Company), and by Jean Lucas-Dubreton (Putnam.)

DIARY OF SAMUEL PEPYS

1665-66

January 1st. Called up by five o'clock by Mr. Tooker, who wrote, while I dictated to him, my business of the Pursers; and so, without eating or drinking, till three in the afternoon, to my great content, finished it.¹

2d. Up by candle-light again, and my business being done, to my Lord Brouncker's, and there find Sir J. Minnes and all his company, and Mr. Boreman and Mrs. Turner, but, above all, my dear Mrs. Knipp, with whom I sang, and in perfect pleasure I was to hear her sing, and especially her little Scotch song of "Barbary Allen"; and to make our mirth the completer, Sir J. Minnes was in the highest pitch of mirth, and his

mimicall tricks, that ever I saw, and most excellent pleasant company he is, and the best musique that ever I saw, and certainly would have made an excellent actor, and now would be an excellent teacher of actors. Then, it being past night, against my will, took leave.

3d. I to the Duke of Albemarle and back again: and, at the Duke's, with great joy, I received the good news of the decrease of the plague this week to 70, and but 253 in all; which is the least Bill hath been known these twenty years in the City, though the want of people in London is it, that must make it so low, below the ordinary number for Bills. So home, and find all my good company I had bespoke, as Colman and his wife, and Laneare, Knipp and her surly husband; and good musick we had, and among other things, Mr. Coleman sang my words I set, of "Beauty, retire," and they praise it mightily. Then to dancing and supper, and mighty merry till Mr. Rolt come in, whose pain of the toothache made him no company, and spoilt ours: so he away, and then my wife's teeth fell of

¹ This document is in the British Museum (Harleian MS., 6287), and is entitled, "A letter from Mr. Pepys, dated at Greenwich, 1st Jan., 1665-6, which he calls his New Year's Gift to his hon. friend, Sir Wm. Coventry, wherein he lays down a Method of securing his Majesty in husbandly execution of the Victualling Part of the Naval Expence." It consists of nineteen closely written folio pages, and is a remarkable specimen of Pepys's business habits. — (Braybrooke's note.)

aching, and she to bed. So forced to break up all with a good song, and so to bed.

5th. I with my Lord Brouncker and Mrs. Williams by coach with four horses to London, to my Lord's house in Covent Garden. But, Lord! what staring to see a nobleman's coach come to town! And porters every where bow to us; and such begging of beggars! And delightful it is to see the town full of people again; and shops begin to open, though in many places seven or eight together, and more, all shut; but yet the town is full, compared with what it used to be. I mean the City¹ end; for Covent Garden and Westminster are yet very empty of people, no Court nor gentry being there. Home, thinking to get Mrs. Knipp, but could not, she being busy with company, but sent me a pleasant letter, writing herself "Barbary Allen." Reading a discourse about the river of Thames, the reason of its being choked up in several places with shelves: which is plain is, by the encroachments made upon the River, and running out of causeways into the River, at every wood-wharfe: which was not heretofore, when Westminster Hall and White Hall were built, and Redriffe Church, which now are sometimes overflown with water.

6th. To a great dinner and much company. Mr. Cuttle and his lady and I went, hoping to get Mrs. Knipp to us, having wrote a letter to her in the morning, calling myself "Dapper Dicky,"² in answer to her's of "Barbary Allen," but could not, and am told by the boy that carried my letter, that he found her crying; and I fear she lives a sad life with that ill-natured fellow her husband: so we had a great, but I a melancholy dinner. After dinner to cards, and then comes notice that my wife is come unexpectedly to me to town: so I to her. It is only to see what I do, and why I come not home; and she is in the right that I would have a little more of Mrs. Knipp's company before I go away. My wife to fetch away my things from Woolwich, and I back to cards, and after cards to choose King and Queene, and a good cake there was, but no marks found; but I privately found the clove, the mark of the knave, and privately put it into Captain Cocke's piece, which made some mirth, because of his lately being known by his buying of clove and mace of the East India prizes.

At night home to my lodging, where I find my wife returned with my things. It being Twelfth-Night,³ they had got the fiddler, and mighty merry they were; and I above, come not to them, leaving them dancing, and choosing King and Queene.

7th. (Lord's day.) The town talks of my Lord Craven being to come into Sir G. Carteret's place; but sure it cannot be true. But I do fear those two families, his and my Lord Sandwich's, are quite broken; and I must now stand upon my own legs. With my wife and Mercer took boat and away home; but in the evening, before I went, comes Mrs. Knipp, just to speak with me privately, to excuse her not coming to me yesterday, complaining how like a devil her husband treats her, but will be with us in town a week hence.

8th. To Bennett's, in Paternoster Row, few shops there being yet open, and there bought velvett for a coat, and camelott for a cloak for myself; and thence to a place to look over some fine counterfeit damasks to hang my wife's closet, and pitched upon one.

9th. To the office, where we met first since the plague, which God preserve us in! Pierce tells me how great a difference hath been between the Duke and Duchess, he suspecting her to be naught with Mr. Sidney. But some way or other the matter is made up; but he [Sidney] was banished the Court, and the Duke for many days did not speak to the Duchess at all. He tells me that my Lord Sandwich is lost there at Court, though the King is particularly his friend. But people do speak every where slightly of him; which is a sad story to me, but I hope it may be better again. And that Sir G. Carteret is neglected, and hath great enemies at work against him. That matters must needs go bad, while all the town, and every boy in the street, openly cries, "The King cannot go away till my Lady Castlemaine be ready to come along with him;" she being lately put to bed. And that he visits her and Mrs. Stewart every morning before he eats his breakfast.

10th. I do find Sir G. Downing to be a mighty talker, more than is true, which I now know to be so, and suspected it before. To my Lord Brouncker's house in Covent Garden. The plague is encreased this week from seventy to eighty-nine. We have also great fear of our Hambrough fleete, of their meeting with the Dutch; as also have certain

i.e., the twelfth after Christmas.

¹ The "City" (still so called) is the old part of London lying east of Temple Bar. It is the business district.

² A song called "Dapper Dick" is in the British Museum; it begins, "In a barren tree." It was printed in 1710. — (Braybrooke's note.)

news, that by storms Sir Jer. Smith's¹ fleet is scattered, and three of them come without masts back to Plymouth. Seeing and saluting Mrs. Stokes, my little goldsmith's wife in Paternoster Row, and there bespoke a silver chafing-dish for warming plates. To the Duke of Albemarle. Here I saw Sir W. Coventry's kind letter to him concerning my paper, and among other of his letters, which I saw all, and that is a strange thing, that whatever is writ to this Duke Albemarle, all the world may see; for this very night he did give me Mr. Coventry's letter to read soon as it come to his hand, before he had read it himself, and bid me take out of it what concerned the Navy, and many things there was in it, which I should not have thought fit for him to have let anybody so suddenly see; but, among other things, find him profess himself to the Duke a friend into the inquiring further into the business of prizes, and advises that it may be publick, for the righting the King, and satisfying the people — the blame to be rightly laid where it should be, which strikes very hard upon my Lord Sandwich, and troubles me to read it. Besides, the Duchess cried mightily out against the having of gentlemen captains with feathers and ribbands, and wished the King would send her husband to sea with the old plain sea Captains that he served with formerly, that would make their ships swim with blood, though they could not make leagues as Captains now-a-days can.

11th. At noon to dinner all of us by invitation to Sir W. Pen's, and much company. Among others, Lieutenant of the Tower, and Broome, his poet, and Dr. Whistler and his [Sir William Pen's] son-in-law Lowther, servant to Mrs. Margaret Pen, and Sir Edward Spragg, a merry man, that sang a pleasant song pleasantly.

12th. I and my Lord Brouncker by coach a little way, for discourse sake, till our coach broke, and tumbled me over him quite down the side of the coach, falling on the ground about the stockes, but up again. To my poor wife, who works all day at home like a horse, at the making of her hangings for our chamber and the bed.

13th. Home with his Lordship to Mrs. Williams's, in Covent Garden, to dinner, the first time I ever was there, and there met Captain Cocke; and pretty merry, though not perfectly so, because of the fear that there

is of a great encrease again of the plague this week. And again my Lord Brouncker do tell us, that he hath it from Sir John Baber, who is related to my Lord Craven, that my Lord Craven do look after Sir G. Carteret's place, and do reckon himself sure of it.

14th. (Lord's day.) Long in bed, till raised by my new taylor, Mr. Penny, who comes and brings me my new velvet coat, very handsome, but plain. At noon eat the second of the two cygnets Mr. Shepley sent us for a new year's gift. This afternoon, after sermon, comes my dear fair beauty of the Exchange, Mrs. Batelier, brought by her sister, an acquaintance of Mercer's, to see my wife. I saluted her with as much pleasure as I had done any a great while. We sat and talked together an hour, with infinite pleasure to me, and so the fair creature went away, and proves one of the modestest women and pretty, that ever I saw in my life, and my wife judges her so, too.

15th. To Mrs. Pierce, to her new house in Covent Garden, a very fine place and fine house. Took her thence home to my house, and so by water to Boreman's by night, where the greatest disappointment that ever I saw in my life — much company, a good supper provided, and all come with expectation of excess of mirth, but all blank through the waywardnesse of Mrs. Knipp, who, though she had appointed the night, could not be got to come. Not so much as her husband could get her to come; but, which was a pleasant thing in all my anger, I asking him, while we were in expectation what answer one of our many messengers would bring, what he thought, whether she would come or no, he answered that, for his part, he could not so much as think. At last, very late, and supper done, she come undressed, but it brought me no mirth at all; only, after all being done, without singing, or very little, and no dancing, Pierce and I to bed together, and he and I very merry to find how little and thin clothes they give us to cover us, so that we were fain to lie in our stockings and drawers, and lay all our coats and clothes upon the bed.

16th. Mightily troubled at the news of the plague's being encreased, and was much the saddest news that the plague hath brought me from the beginning of it; because of the lateness of the year, and the fear we may with reason have of its continuing with us the next summer. The total being now 375, and the plague 158.

17th. After dinner, late took horse, and I

¹ Admiral Sir Jeremy Smith, mentioned October 13 1665 *ante*, commanded a fleet in the Streights at this time, and another in the Channel in 1668. — (Braybrooke's note.)

rode to Dagenhams in the dark. It was my Lord Crewe's desire that I should come, and chiefly to discourse with me of my Lord Sandwich's matters; and therein to persuade, what I had done already, that my Lord should sue out a pardon for his business of the prizes, as also for Bergen, and all he hath done this year past, before he begins his Embassy to Spain; for it is to be feared that the Parliament will fly out against him, and particular men, the next Session. He is glad also that my Lord is clear of his sea-employment, though sorry, as I am, only in the manner of its bringing about. After supper, up to wait on my Lady Crewe, who is the same weak silly lady as ever, asking such saintly questions.

18th. To Captain Cocke's, where Mrs. Williams was, and Mrs. Knipp. I was not heartily merry, though a glass of wine did a little cheer me. After dinner to the office. Anon comes to me thither my Lord Brouncker, Mrs. Williams, and Knipp. I brought down my wife in her night-gown, she not being indeed very well, to the office to them. My wife and I anon and Mercer, by coach, to Pierce's, where mighty merry, and sing and dance with great pleasure; and I danced, who never did in company in my life.

19th. It is a remarkable thing how infinitely naked all that end of the town, Covent Garden, is, at this day, of people, while the City is almost as full again of people as ever it was.

20th. I sent my boy home for some papers, where, he staying longer than I would have him, I become angry, and boxed my boy when he come, that I do hurt my thumb so much, that I was not able to stir all the day after, and in great pain.

22d. At noon my Lord Brouncker did come, but left the keys of the chest we should open, at Sir G. Carteret's lodgings, of my Lord Sandwich's, wherein Howe's supposed jewels are; so we could not, according to my Lord Arlington's order, see them to-day: but we parted, resolving to meet here at night: my Lord Brouncker being going with Dr. Wilkins, Mr. Hooke, and others, to Colonel Blunt's, to consider again of the business of chariots, and to try their new invention, which I saw here my Lord Brouncker ride in; where the coachman sits astride upon a pole over the horse, but do not touch the horse, which is a pretty odde thing; but it seems it is most easy for the horse, and, as they say, for the man also. The first meet-

ing of Gresham College¹ since the plague. Dr. Goddard did fill us with talk, in defence of his and his fellow physicians going out of town in the plague-time; saying, that their particular patients were most gone out of town, and they left at liberty; and a great deal more. But what, among other fine discourse, pleased me most, was Sir G. Ent,² about respiration; that it is not to this day known, or concluded on, among physicians, nor to be done either, how the action is managed by nature, or for what use it is.

23d. Good news beyond all expectation of the decrease of the plague, being now but 79, and the whole but 272. So home with comfort to bed. A most furious storme all night and morning.

24th. My Lord [Brouncker] and I, the weather being a little fairer, by water to Deptford, to Sir G. Carteret's house, where W. Howe met us, and there we opened the chests, and saw the poor sorry rubys which have caused all this ado to the undoing of W. Howe; though I am not much sorry for it, because of his pride and ill nature. About 200 of these very small stones, and a cod³ of muske, which it is strange I was not able to smell, is all we could find; so locked them up again, and my Lord and I, the wind being again very furious, so as we durst not go by water, walked to London quite round the bridge, no boat being able to stirre; and, Lord! what a dirty walk we had, and so strong the wind, that in the fields we many times could not carry our bodies against it, but were driven backwards. We went through Horslydowne, where I never was since a boy, that I went to enquire after my father, whom we did give over for lost coming from Holland. It was dangerous to walk the streets, the bricks and tiles falling from the houses, that the whole streets were covered with them; and whole chimneys, nay, whole houses, in two or three places, blowed down. But, above all, the pales of London Bridge, on both sides, were blown away, so that we were fain to stoop very low for fear of blowing off of the bridge. We could see no boats in the Thames afloat, but what were broke loose, and carried through the bridge, it being ebbing water. And the greatest sight of all was, among other parcels of ships driven here and there in clusters together; one was quite overset, and lay with her

¹ Founded in 1579 by Sir Thomas Gresham, to provide for lectures by seven professors.

² Sir George Ent, F.R.S., President of the College of Physicians. He died in 1689. — (Braybrooke's note.)
³ sack.

masts all along in the water, and keel above water.

25th. It is now certain that the King of France hath publicly declared war against us, and God knows how little fit we are for it.

26th. Pleased mightily with what my poor wife hath been doing these eight or ten days with her own hands, like a drudge, in fitting the new hangings of our bedchamber of blue, and putting the old red ones into my dressing-room.

28th. (Lord's day.) Took coach, and to Hampton Court, where we find the King, and Duke, and Lords, all in council; so we walked up and down: there being none of the ladies come, and so much the more business I hope will be done. The Council being up, out comes the King, and I kissed his hand, and he grasped me very kindly by the hand. The Duke also, I kissed his, and he mighty kind, and Sir W. Coventry. I found my Lord Sandwich there, poor man! I see with a melancholy face, and suffers his beard to grow on his upper lip more than usual. I took him a little aside, to know when I should wait on him, and where: he told me, that it would be best to meet at his lodgings, without being seen to walk together, which I liked very well; and, Lord! to see in what difficulty I stand, that I dare not walk with Sir W. Coventry, for fear my Lord or Sir G. Carteret should see me; nor with either of them, for fear Sir W. Coventry should. I went down into one of the Courts, and there met the King and Duke; and the Duke called me to him. And the King come to me of himself, and told me, "Mr. Pepys," says he, "I do give you thanks for your good service all this year, and I assure you I am very sensible of it." And the Duke of York did tell me with pleasure, that he had read over my discourse about pursers, and would have it ordered in my way, and so fell from one discourse to another. I walked with them quite out of the Court into the fields, and then back, and to my Lord Sandwich's chamber, where I find him very melancholy, and not well satisfied, I perceive, with my carriage to Sir G. Carteret, but I did satisfy him that I have a very hard game to play; and he told me that he was sorry to see it, and the inconveniences which likely may fall upon me with him; but, for all that, I am not much afraid, if I can but keep out of harm's way. He hath got over the business of the prizes, so far as to have a privy seal passed for all that was in his distribution to the

officers, which I am heartily glad of; and, for the rest, he must be answerable for what he is proved to have. But for his pardon for anything else, he thinks it not seasonable to ask it, and not useful to him; because that will not stop a Parliament's mouth, and for the King, he is not sure of him. Took boat, and by water to Kingston, and so to our lodgings.

29th. Up, and to Court by coach, where to council before the Duke of York, the Duke of Albemarle with us. My Lord Sandwich come in, in the middle of the business, and, poor man, very melancholy, methought, and said little at all, or to the business, and sat at the lower end, just as he come, no room being made for him, only I did give him my stool, and another was reached me. Mr. Evelyn and I into my Lord Brouncker's coach, and rode together with excellent discourse till we come to Clapham, talking of the vanity and vices of the Court, which makes it a most contemptible thing; and, indeed, in all his discourse, I find him a most worthy person. Particularly he entertained me with discourse of an Infirmary, which he hath projected for the sick and wounded seamen against the next year, which I mightily approve of; and will endeavour to promote it, being a worthy thing, and of use, and will save money. He set me down at Mr. Gauden's, where I took a book and into the gardens, and there walked and read till dark. Anon come in Creed and Mr. Gauden, and his sons, and then they bring in three ladies, who were in the house, but I do not know them — his [Gauden's] daughter and two nieces, daughters of Dr. Whistler's, with whom and Creed mighty sport at supper, the ladies very pretty and mirthfull. After supper, I made the ladies sing, yet it was the saddest stuff I ever heard. However, we sat up late, and then I, in the best chamber, like a prince, to bed, and Creed with me, and, being sleepy, talked but little.

30th. Home, finding the town keeping the day solemnly, it being the day of the King's murder; and they being at church, I presently into the church. This is the first time I have been in the church since I left London for the plague, and it frightened me indeed to go through the church more than I thought it could have done, to see so many graves lie so high upon the churchyards, where people have been buried of the plague. I was much troubled at it, and do not think to go through it again a good while.

31st. I find many about the City that live

near the churchyards solicitous to have the churchyards covered with lime, and I think it is needfull, and ours, I hope, will be done. To my Lord Chancellor's new house which he is building, only to view it, hearing so much from Mr. Evelyn of it; and, indeed, it is the finest pile I ever did see in my life, and

will be a glorious house. To White Hall, and, to my great joy, people begin to bustle up and down there, the King holding his resolution to be in town to-morrow, and hath good encouragement, blessed be God! to do so, the plague being decreased this week to 56, and the total to 227.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1700)

Dryden was the foremost literary man of his time, in verse, in prose, and in the drama. Much that he wrote was so wrapped up in the politics and religious discussions of the day that they are hard reading for one not thoroughly acquainted with the period; but there is enough besides of so universal a quality to justify amply Dryden's high place in the literature of Great Britain.

He was born August 9 (?), 1631, in Northamptonshire and educated at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge, from which he received his B.A. in 1650. His literary career really began in 1658 with *Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell*. Two years later, he celebrated the return of King Charles in *Astræa Redux*. This apparently sudden shift in politics, and his going over to the Church of Rome later in life, have caused many readers to regard Dryden as a time-server, like the Vicar of Bray in the old song.

In 1663 Dryden began his career as a playwright. For over a score of years he was the chief dramatist of the Restoration. Among his many plays the most striking are *The Rival Ladies*, *The Indian Emperor*, *The Conquest of Granada*, and *All for Love*, his most representative tragedy, a version that he made in 1678 of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is a typical "heroic play": in its setting, in its approximate employment of the unities of time and place, in its treatment of the love and ambition of titanic characters, and in the manner in which it was produced — in a large theater, with actresses (unlike the Elizabethan custom), with incidental music, with movable scenery, and whatever else would add to the spectacle. Unlike other heroic plays, however, it is written, not in couplets, but in blank verse. Dryden also made an operatic version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and an alteration of *Troilus and Cressida*.

Of Dryden's many poetic works the following are the most significant: *Annus Mirabilis*, 1666, a vivid account of the year 1666, the year of the Dutch war, the plague, and the great fire of London; the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1668; *Absalom and Achitophel*, 1681, a political allegory attacking those who planned to put the Duke of Monmouth on the throne; *MacFlecknoe*, a literary satire in which he attacked Shadwell particularly; *Religio Laici*, 1683, a defense of his religion, followed four years later, after his conversion to Catholicism, by *The Hind and the Panther*, in which he defended the Church of Rome; his translation of Virgil, 1697; the incomparable lyrics, *The Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* and *Alexander's Feast*; and the *Fables*, 1700.

Dryden is distinctly a product of his time. As a writer of heroic couplets, a satirist and controversialist, he is supreme. As a critic, he followed the neo-classic rules, yet showed original insight into many literary problems. In the drama, for which he was temperamentally unfitted, he overshadowed all his contemporaries. His clear, crisp essays and prefaces were a new and vital influence in the development of prose style. He was the literary dictator of an age that worshiped reason and craftsmanship, often at the expense of imagination; but he can still be read with pleasure and profit by a modern reader who is willing and able to make the intellectual adjustment necessary.

The best one-volume edition of Dryden's poems is the Cambridge (Houghton Mifflin Company); of his plays, Noyes' (Scott Foresman). His complete works, with a biography, were edited by Sir Walter Scott, and revised by Professor Saintsbury. Dr. Johnson included him in his *Lives of the Poets*. The most recent studies of Dryden are by T. S. Eliot and Mark van Doren.

MAC FLECKNOE

OR, A SATIRE UPON THE TRUE-BLUE-
PROTESTANT POET

T. S.

BY THE AUTHOR OF ABSALOM AND

ACHITOPHEL

After the charge of high treason against Shaftesbury (whom Dryden had attacked in

Absalom and Achitophel) had been dropped, a medal was struck in honor of the event. Dryden wrote a satire on the proceedings, *The Medal* (1682), which Shadwell answered with a vitriolic and coarse poem, *The Medal of John Bayes*. Dryden's reply was the following poem, a good example of the personal satire of the times.

All human things are subject to decay,
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey.

This Flecknoe¹ found, who, like Augustus,
 young
 Was called to empire, and had governed
 long;
 In prose and verse, was owned, without dis-
 pute, 5
 Thro' all the realms of *Nonsense*, absolute.
 This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
 And blest with issue of a large increase;
 Worn out with business, did at length debate
 To settle the succession of the State; 10
 And, pond'ring which of all his sons was fit
 To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
 Cried: "'Tis resolved; for nature pleads,
 that he
 Should only rule, who most resembles me.
 Sh——² alone my perfect image bears, 15
 Mature in dulness from his tender years:
 Sh—— alone, of all my sons, is he
 Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
 The rest to some faint meaning make pre-
 tense,
 But Sh—— never deviates into sense. 20
 Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
 Strike thro', and make a lucid interval;
 But Sh——'s genuine night admits no ray,
 His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
 Besides, his goodly fabric³ fills the eye, 25
 And seems designed for thoughtless majesty;
 Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the
 plain,
 And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
 Heywood and Shirley⁴ were but types of
 thee,
 Thou last great prophet of tautology. 30
 Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
 Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
 And, coarsely clad in Norwich druggot,⁵
 came
 To teach the nations in thy greater name.
 My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung,
 When to King John of Portugal I sung,⁶ 36
 Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
 When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy
 way,
 With well-timed oars before the royal barge,
 Swelled with the pride of thy celestial charge;
 And big with hymn, commander of a host, 41
 The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets⁷ tossed.

Methinks I see the new Arion¹ sail,
 The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
 At thy well-sharpened thumb from shore
 to shore 45
 The treble squeaks for fear, the basses roar;
 Echoes from Pissing Alley Sh—— call,
 And Sh—— they resound from Aston Hall.
 About thy boat the little fishes throng,
 As at the morning toast that floats along. 50
 Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious
 band,
 Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing
 hand.
 St. André's² feet ne'er kept more equal time,
 Not ev'n the feet of thy own *Psyche's*³
 rhyme;
 Tho' they in number as in sense excel: 55
 So just, so like tautology, they fell,
 That, pale with envy, Singleton⁴ forswore
 The lute and sword, which he in triumph
 bore,
 And vowed he ne'er would act Villerius⁵
 more." 60
 Here stopped the good old sire, and wept for
 joy
 In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
 All arguments, but most his plays, persuade,
 That for anointed dulness he was made.
 Close to the walls which fair Augusta⁶
 bind, 64
 (The fair Augusta much to fears⁷ inclined,)
 An ancient fabric raised t' inform the sight,
 There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight:
 A watchtower once; but now, so fate or-
 dains,
 Of all the pile an empty name remains.
 From its old ruins brothel-houses rise, 70
 Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys,
 Where their vast courts the mother-strum-
 pets keep,
 And, undisturbed by watch, in silence sleep.
 Near these a Nursery⁸ erects its head,
 Where queens are formed, and future heroes
 bred; 75
 Where unfledged actors learn to laugh and
 cry,
 Where infant punks their tender voices
 try,
 And little Maximins⁹ the gods defy.

¹ An insignificant miscellaneous writer (d. 1678), who was not as bad, however, as Dryden pictures him.

² Obviously, Shadwell, 1642?–92, poet and dramatist, who, in 1688, succeeded Dryden as Poet Laureate.

³ Shadwell was a large man.

⁴ Later Elizabethan dramatists; both, especially Heywood, were far better than Dryden admits.

⁵ rough, woolen cloth.

⁶ Flecknoe had actually been at the King of Portugal's court.

⁷ Why the epithet "Epsom" is used is not clear, except as a poor allusion to Shadwell's play, *Epsom Wells*.

¹ The Greek musician of the seventh century B.C., saved from drowning, according to the fable, by a dolphin charmed by his music.

² A French dancing teacher.

³ *Psyche* is a little-known play of Shadwell's.

⁴ A contemporary actor.

⁵ A character in Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes*, 1656.

⁶ London.

⁷ i.e., of plots to put a Catholic on the throne.

⁸ A school for actors.

⁹ Maximin is a character in Dryden's *Tyrannic Love*, 1669.

Great Fletcher¹ never treads in buskins²
 here,
 Nor greater Jonson dares in socks³ appear;
 But gentle Simkin⁴ just reception finds⁸¹
 Amidst this monument of vanished minds:
 Pure clinches⁵ the suburban Muse affords,
 And Panton⁶ waging harmless war with
 words.

Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well
 known,⁸⁵

Ambitiously designed his Sh——'s throne;
 For ancient Dekker⁷ prophesied long since,
 That in this pile should reign a mighty
 prince,

Born for a scourge of wit, and flail of sense;
 To whom true dulness should some *Psyches*
 owe,⁹⁰

But worlds of *Misers*⁸ from his pen should
 flow;

Humorists and hypocrites it should pro-
 duce,

Whole Raymond families, and tribes of
 Bruce.

Now Empress Fame had published the
 renown

Of Sh——'s coronation thro' the town.⁹⁵
 Roused by report of Fame, the nations meet,
 From near Bunhill,⁹ and distant Watling
 Street.¹⁰

No Persian carpets spread th' imperial way,
 But scattered limbs of mangled poets lay;
 From dusty shops neglected authors come,
 Martyrs of pies, and relics of the bum.¹⁰¹
 Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby¹¹ there
 lay,

But loads of Sh—— almost choked the way.
 Bilked¹² stationers for yeomen stood pre-
 pared,

And Herringman¹³ was captain of the guard.
 The hoary prince in majesty appeared,¹⁰⁶
 High on a throne of his own labors reared.
 At his right hand our young Ascanius¹⁴
 sat,

Rome's other hope, and pillar of the State.
 His brows thick fogs, instead of glories,
 grace,¹¹⁰

And lambent dulness played around his
 face.

As Hannibal did to the altars come,
 Sworn by his sire a mortal foe to Rome;

¹ Beaumont's collaborator. ² i.e., in tragedy.

³ in comedy. ⁴ A low-comedy actor.

⁵ clenches, or puns. ⁶ A forgotten writer.

⁷ The Elizabethan dramatist.

⁸ *The Miser* and *The Humorists* are plays by Shadwell.

⁹ An old burial ground near the center of London.

¹⁰ A street, dating from Roman times, at the edge of the
 town.

¹¹ A forgotten writer. ¹² cheated.

¹³ A publisher of the day.

¹⁴ Æneas's son; the heir apparent.

So Sh—— swore, nor should his vow be
 vain,

That he till death true dulness would main-
 tain;¹¹⁵

And, in his father's right, and realm's de-
 fense,

Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with
 sense.

The king himself the sacred unction made,
 As king by office, and as priest by trade.

In his sinister hand, instead of ball,¹²⁰

He placed a mighty mug of potent ale;
*Love's Kingdom*¹ to his right he did convey,

At once his scepter, and his rule of sway;
 Whose righteous lore the price had practiced
 young,

And from whose loins recorded *Psyche*
 sprung.¹²⁵

His temples, last, with poppies were o'er-
 spread,

That nodding seemed to consecrate his
 head.

Just at that point of time, if fame not lie,
 On his left hand twelve reverend owls did
 fly.

So Romulus, 'tis sung, by Tiber's brook,
 Presage of sway from twice six vultures
 took.¹³¹

Th' admiring throng loud acclamations
 make,

And omens of his future empire take.
 The sire then shook the honors of his head,
 And from his brows damps of oblivion shed

Full on the filial dulness: long he stood,
 Repelling from his breast the raging god;
 At length burst out in this prophetic
 mood:

"Heavens bless my son, from Ireland let
 him reign

To far Barbadoes on the western main;¹⁴⁰
 Of his dominion may no end be known,
 And greater than his father's be his throne;

Beyond *Love's Kingdom* let him stretch his
 pen!"

He paused, and all the people cried,
 "Amen."

Then thus continued he: "My son, advance
 Still in new impudence, new ignorance.¹⁴⁶

Success let others teach, learn thou from me
 Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.

Let *Virtuosos*² in five years be writ;
 Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.

Let gentle George³ in triumph tread the
 stage,¹⁵¹

Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;

¹ A play by Shadwell.
² Shadwell wrote a play *The Virtuoso*, 1676.

³ Sir George Etherege (1635?–91), the author of three
 popular, but excellent, comedies in prose.

Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling,¹ charm the
pit,

And in their folly shew the writer's wit.
Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defense,
And justify their author's want of sense. 156
Let 'em be all by thy own model made
Of dulness, and desire no foreign aid;
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own. 160
Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee, and differing but in name.
But let no alien S—dl—y² interpose,
To lard with wit thy hungry *Epsom* prose.
And when false flowers of rhetoric thou
wouldst cull, 165

Trust nature, do not labor to be dull;
But write thy best, and top; and, in each
line,
Sir Formal's³ oratory will be thine:
Sir Formal, tho' unsought, attends thy quill,
And does thy northern dedications fill. 170
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to
fame,

By arrogating Jonson's⁴ hostile name.
Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with
praise,
And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no
part: 175

What share have we in nature, or in art?
Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
And rail at arts he did not understand?
Where made he love in Prince Nicander's⁵
vein, 179

Or swept the dust in *Psyche's* humble strain?
Where sold he bargains, 'whip-stitch, kiss
my arse,'

Promis'd a play and dwindled to a farce?
When did his Muse from Fletcher scenes
purloin,
As thou whole Eth'rege dost transfuse to
thine?

But so transfused, as oil on water's flow, 185
His always floats above, thine sinks below.
This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
New humors to invent for each new play:
This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
By which one way, to dulness, 'tis inclined;
Which makes thy writings lean on one side
still, 191

And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.
Nor let thy mountain-belly make pretense
Of likeness; thine's a tympany of sense.

¹ These are characters in contemporary plays.
² Sir Charles Sedley, a witty courtier and minor writer,
who is said to have helped Shadwell in his writing. He is
the Lisideius of Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*.
³ A character in Shadwell's *The Virtuoso*.
⁴ Shadwell was an admirer and follower of Ben Jonson.
⁵ A character in Shadwell's *Psyche*.

A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
But sure thou'rt but a kilderkin¹ of wit.
Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep;
Thy tragic Muse gives smiles, thy comic
sleep,

With whate'er gall thou sett'st thyself to
write,

Thy inoffensive satires never bite. 200
In thy felonious heart tho' venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen iambics, but mild anagram.

Leave writing plays, and choose for thy com-
mand 205

Some peaceful province in acrostic land.
There thou may'st wings display and altars
raise,

And torture one poor word ten thousand
ways.

Or, if thou wouldst thy diff'rent talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy
lute." 210

He said: but his last words were scarcely
heard;
For Bruce and Longvil² had a trap pre-
pared,
And down they sent the yet declaiming
bard.

Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
Borne upwards by a subterranean wind. 215
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.

1682

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1687

This ode, and the next, were written for a
London musical society which celebrated every
year the day of St. Cecilia, the patroness of
music. Both odes were set to music and per-
formed in public.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began;
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head, 5
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
"Arise, ye more than dead."

Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey. 10
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony

¹ a small barrel.

² Characters in *The Virtuoso*.

Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man. 15

What passion cannot Music raise and quell!
When Jubal¹ struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound: 20
Less than a god they thought there could not
dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That spoke so sweetly, and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell!

The trumpet's loud clangor 25
Excites us to arms
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double, double, double beat
Of the thundering drum 30
Cries, "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers, 35
Whose dirge is whispered by the warb-
ling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains and height of passion, 40
For the fair, disdainful dame.

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love, 45
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious² of the lyre; 50
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher;
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking earth for heaven.

GRAND CHORUS

As from the power of sacred lays 55
The spheres began to move,
And sung that great Creator's praise
To all the blessed above;

So, when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour, 60
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

1687?; pub. 1693

ALEXANDER'S FEAST; OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC

A SONG IN HONOR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY,
1697

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:¹
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne; 5
His valiant peers were placed around;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles
bound:

(So should desert in arms be crowned.)
The lovely Thais,² by his side,
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride, 10
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the
fair. 15

CHORUS

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

Timotheus,³ placed on high 20
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touched the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove, 25
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the power of mighty love).
A dragon's fiery form belied the god:
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
When he to fair Olympia⁴ pressed; 30
And while he sought her snowy breast,
Then round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign
of the world.
The listening crowd admire the lofty
sound,

¹ See Gen. iv, 21. "He was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ."
² following.

¹ Alexander. ² The Greek courtesan.
³ Alexander's favorite musician.
⁴ Alexander's mother.

"A present deity," they shout around; 35
 "A present deity," the vaulted roofs rebound:

With ravished ears
 The monarch hears,
 Assumes the god,
 Affects to nod, 40
 And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS

With ravished ears
 The monarch hears,
 Assumes the god,
 Affects to nod, 45
 And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
 Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young.
 The jolly god in triumph comes;
 Sound the trumpets, beat the drums;
 Flushed with a purple grace 51
 He shows his honest face:
 Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes.
 Bacchus, ever fair and young,
 Drinking joys did first ordain; 55
 Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
 Rich the treasure,
 Sweet the pleasure,
 Sweet is pleasure after pain. 60

CHORUS

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
 Rich the treasure,
 Sweet the pleasure,
 Sweet is pleasure after pain. 65

Soothed with the sound the king grew vain;
 Fought all his battles o'er again;
 And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice
 he slew the slain.

The master saw the madness rise,
 His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes; 70
 And while he heaven and earth defied,
 Changed his hand, and checked his pride.
 He chose a mournful Muse,
 Soft pity to infuse;
 He sung Darius¹ great and good, 75
 By too severe a fate,
 Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
 Fallen from his high estate,
 And weltering in his blood;
 Deserted at his utmost need 80
 By those his former bounty fed;

¹ Conquered by Alexander.

On the bare earth exposed he lies,
 With not a friend to close his eyes.

With downcast looks the joyless victor
 sate,
 Revolving in his altered soul 85
 The various turns of chance below;
 And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
 And tears began to flow.

CHORUS

Revolving in his altered soul
 The various turns of chance below;
 And, now and then, a sigh he stole, 91
 And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see
 That love was in the next degree;
 'Twas but a kindred sound to move, 95
 For pity melts the mind to love.
 Softly sweet, in Lydian² measures,
 Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
 "War," he sung, "is toil and trouble;
 Honor but an empty bubble; 100
 Never ending, still beginning,
 Fighting still, and still destroying;
 If the world be worth thy winning,
 Think, O think it worth enjoying:
 Lovely Thais sits beside thee, 105
 Take the good the gods provide thee."

The many rend the skies with loud applause;
 So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.
 The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
 Gazed on the fair 110
 Who caused his care,
 And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
 Sighed and looked, and sighed again;
 At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
 The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast. 115

CHORUS

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
 Gazed on the fair
 Who caused his care,
 And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
 Sighed and looked, and sighed again; 120
 At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
 The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

Now strike the golden lyre again;
 A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.

² gentle, sensuous.

Break his bands of sleep asunder, 125
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of
thunder.

Hark, hark, the horrid sound
Has raised up his head;
As awaked from the dead,

And, amazed, he stares around. 130

"Revenge, revenge!" Timotheus cries;

"See the Furies arise;

See the snakes that they rear,

How they hiss in their hair,

And the sparkles that flash from their
eyes? 135

Behold a ghastly band,

Each a torch in his hand!

Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were
slain,

And unburied remain

Inglorious on the plain: 140

Give the vengeance due

To the valiant crew.

Behold how they toss their torches on high,

How they point to the Persian abodes,

And glittering temples of their hostile gods!"

The princes applaud with a furious joy; 146

And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to
destroy;

Thais led the way,

To light him to his prey,

And, like another Helen, fired another
Troy. 150

CHORUS

And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to
destroy;

Thais led the way,

To light him to his prey,

And, like another Helen, fired another
Troy.

Thus long ago, 155

Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,

While organs yet were mute,

Timotheus, to his breathing flute

And sounding lyre,

Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft
desire. 160

At last divine Cecilia came,

Inventress of the vocal frame;

The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,

Enlarged the former narrow bounds,

And added length to solemn sounds, 165

With Nature's mother wit, and arts unknown
before.

Let old Timotheus yield the prize,

Or both divide the crown:

He raised a mortal to the skies;

She drew an angel down. 170

GRAND CHORUS

At last divine Cecilia came,

Inventress of the vocal frame;

The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,

Enlarged the former narrow bounds,

And added length to solemn sounds, 175

With Nature's mother wit, and arts unknown
before.

Let old Timotheus yield the prize,

Or both divide the crown:

He raised a mortal to the skies;

She drew an angel down. 180

AH, HOW SWEET IT IS TO LOVE!

This song is from the play, *Tyrannic Love*.

Ah, how sweet it is to love!

Ah, how gay is young Desire!

And what pleasing pains we prove

When we first approach Love's fire!

Pains of love be sweeter far 5

Than all other pleasures are.

Sighs which are from lovers blown

Do but gently heave the heart:

Ev'n the tears they shed alone

Cure, like trickling balm, their smart: 10

Lovers, when they lose their breath,

Bleed away in easy death.

Love and Time with reverence use,

Treat them like a parting friend;

Nor the golden gifts refuse, 15

Which in youth sincere they send:

For each year their price is more,

And they less simple than before.

Love, like spring-tides full and high,

Swells in every youthful vein; 20

But each tide does less supply,

Till they quite shrink in again:

If a flow in age appear,

'Tis but rain, and runs not clear.

EPIGRAM ON MILTON

These lines were printed under the engraved
portrait of Milton in the folio edition of *Para-
dise Lost*, 1688.

Three poets, in three distant ages born,

Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.

The first ¹ in loftiness of thought surpassed,

The next ² in majesty, in both the last.

The force of Nature could no farther go; 5

To make a third she joined the former two.

1 Homer.

2 Virgil.

AN ESSAY OF DRAMATIC POESY (1668)

This famous essay is one of the best that Dryden wrote. It is cast in the form of a conversation carried on by Eugenius (Lord Buckhurst), Crites (Sir Robert Howard), Lisideius (Sir Charles Sedley), and Neander (Dryden), while they are boating on the Thames. The passage below is the last third of the essay.

"But to return whence I¹ have digressed: I dare boldly affirm these two things of the English drama: — First, that we have many plays of ours as regular as any of theirs,² and which, besides, have more variety of plot and characters; and secondly, that in most of the irregular plays of Shakespeare or Fletcher (for Ben Jonson's are for the most part regular), there is a more masculine fancy and greater spirit in the writing than there is in any of the French. I could produce, even in Shakespeare's and Fletcher's works, some plays which are almost exactly formed; as *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Scornful Lady*: but because (generally speaking) Shakespeare, who writ first, did not perfectly observe the laws of comedy, and Fletcher, who came nearer to perfection, yet through carelessness made many faults; I will take the pattern of a perfect play from Ben Jonson, who was a careful and learned observer of the dramatic laws, and from all his comedies I shall select *The Silent Woman*; of which I will make a short examen, according to those rules which the French observe."

As Neander was beginning to examine *The Silent Woman*, Eugenius, earnestly regarding him; "I beseech you, Neander," said he, "gratify the company, and me in particular, so far, as before you speak of the play, to give us a character of the author; and tell us frankly your opinion, whether you do not think all writers, both French and English, ought to give place to him."

"I fear," replied Neander, "that in obeying your commands I shall draw some envy on myself. Besides, in performing them, it will be first necessary to speak somewhat of Shakespeare and Fletcher, his rivals in poesy; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superior."

"To begin, then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them,

not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches,³ his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.⁴

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales⁵ of Eton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better done in Shakespeare; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem: and in the last king's⁴ court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him.

"Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am next to speak, had, with the advantage of Shakespeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts, improved by study: Beaumont especially being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and, 'tis thought, used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots. What value he had for him, appears by the verses he writ to him; and therefore I need speak no farther of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem was their *Philaster*: for before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully, as the like is reported of Ben Jonson, before he writ *Every Man in his Humour*. Their plots were generally more regular than Shakespeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much

¹ A clench is a play on words, "false wit."

² As cypresses are accustomed among bending shrubs.

³ John Hales, 1584-1656, learned theologian and fellow of Eton College, who, according to tradition, was present when Ben Jonson talked of Shakespeare's lack of learning.

⁴ Charles I.

¹ Neander (Dryden).

² The French.

better; whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet before them could paint as they have done. Humor, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe: they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection: what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage, two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's. The reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suit generally with all men's humors. Shakespeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.

"As for Jonson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theater ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit, and language, and humor also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the drama till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavoring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humor was his proper sphere; and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them. There is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weaved it too closely and laboriously,

in his comedies especially. Perhaps, too, he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them: wherein, though he learnedly followed their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. To conclude of him; as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *Discoveries*, we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any where with the French can furnish us.

"Having thus spoken of the author, I proceed to the examination of his comedy, *The Silent Woman*.

[Here follows a careful analysis of Jonson's play.]

This was the substance of what was then spoken on that occasion; and Lisideus, I think, was going to reply, when he was prevented thus by Crites: "I am confident," said he, "that the most material things that can be said have been already urged on either side; if they have not, I must beg of Lisideus that he will defer his answer till another time: for I confess I have a joint quarrel to you both, because you have concluded, without any reason given for it, that rhyme is proper for the stage. I will not dispute how ancient it hath been among us to write this way; perhaps our ancestors knew no better till Shakespeare's time. I will grant it was not altogether left by him, and that Fletcher and Ben Jonson used it frequently in their Pastorals, and sometimes in other plays. Farther, — I will not argue whether we received it originally from our own countrymen, or from the French; for that is an inquiry of as little benefit, as theirs who, in the midst of the great plague, were not so solicitous to provide against it, as to know whether we had it from the malignity of our own air, or by transportation from Holland. I have therefore only to affirm, that it is not allowable in serious plays; for comedies, I find you already concluding with me. To prove this, I might satisfy myself to tell you, how much in vain it is for you to strive against the stream of the people's inclination; the greatest part of which are prepossessed so much

with those excellent plays of Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson, which have been written out of rhyme, that except you could bring them such as were written better in it, and those too by persons of equal reputation with them, it will be impossible for you to gain your cause with them, who will still be judges. This it is to which, in fine, all your reasons must submit. The unanimous consent of an audience is so powerful, that even Julius Cæsar (as Macrobius reports of him), when he was perpetual dictator, was not able to balance it on the other side; but when Laberius, a Roman Knight, at his request contended in the *Mime*¹ with another poet, he was forced to cry out, *Etiam favente me victus es, Laberi*.² But I will not on this occasion take the advantage of the greater number, but only urge such reasons against rhyme, as I find in the writings of those who have argued for the other way. First, then, I am of opinion that rhyme is unnatural in a play, because dialogue there is presented as the effect of sudden thought: for a play is the imitation of nature; and since no man, without premeditation, speaks in rhyme, neither ought he to do it on the stage. This hinders not but the fancy may be there elevated to an higher pitch of thought than it is in ordinary discourse; for there is a probability that men of excellent and quick parts may speak noble things *extempore*: but those thoughts are never fettered with the numbers or sound of verse without study, and therefore it cannot be but unnatural to present the most free way of speaking in that which is the most constrained. For this reason, says Aristotle, 'tis best to write tragedy in that kind of verse which is the least such, or which is nearest prose: and this amongst the ancients was the Iambic, and with us is blank verse, or the measure of verse kept exactly without rhyme. These numbers therefore are fittest for a play; the others for a paper of verses, or a poem; blank verse being as much below them as rhyme is improper for the drama. And if it be objected that neither are blank verses made *extempore*, yet, as nearest nature, they are still to be preferred. — But there are two particular exceptions, which many besides myself have had to verse; by which it will appear yet more plainly how improper it is in plays. And the first of them is grounded on that very reason for which some have commended

rhyme; they say, the quickness of repartees in argumentative scenes receives an ornament from verse. Now what is more unreasonable than to imagine that a man should not only light upon the wit, but the rhyme too, upon the sudden? This nicking of him who spoke before both in sound and measure, is so great an happiness, that you must at least suppose the persons of your play to be born poets: *Arcades omnes, et cantare pares, et respondere parati*:¹ they must have arrived to the degree of *quicquid conabar dicere*; ² — to make verses almost whether they will or no. If they are anything below this, it will look rather like the design of two, than the answer of one: it will appear that your actors hold intelligence together; that they perform their tricks like fortune-tellers, by confederacy. The hand of art will be too visible in it, against that maxim of all professions — *Ars est celare artem*:³ that it is the greatest perfection of art to keep itself undiscovered. Nor will it serve you to object, that however you manage it, 'tis still known to be a play; and, consequently, the dialogue of two persons understood to be the labor of one poet. For a play is still an imitation of nature; we know we are to be deceived, and we desire to be so; but no man ever was deceived but with a probability of truth; for who will suffer a gross lie to be fastened on him? Thus we sufficiently understand that the scenes which represent cities and countries to us are not really such, but only painted on boards and canvas; but shall that excuse the ill painture or designment of them? Nay, rather ought they not be labored with so much the more diligence and exactness, to help the imagination? since the mind of man does naturally tend to truth; and therefore the nearer anything comes to the imitation of it, the more it pleases.

"Thus, you see, your rhyme is incapable of expressing the greatest thoughts naturally, and the lowest it cannot with any grace: for what is more unbefitting the majesty of verse, than to call a servant, or bid a door be shut in rhyme? and yet you are often forced on this miserable necessity. But verse, you say, circumscribes a quick and luxuriant fancy, which would extend itself too far on every subject, did not the labor which is required to well-turned and polished rhyme, set bounds

1 Both young Arcadians, both alike inspired
To sing, and answer as the song required.
Virgil's *Seventh Eclogue*, Dryden's translation.

2 Whatever I tried to express [became poetry].
Ovid, *Tristia*, iv.

3 The business of art is to conceal art.

1 satiric play.

2 Even with me in your favor, you are defeated, Laberius.

to it. Yet this argument, if granted, would only prove that we may write better in verse, but not more naturally. Neither is it able to evince that; for he who wants judgment to confine his fancy in blank verse, may want it as much in rhyme: and he who has it will avoid errors in both kinds. Latin verse was as great a confinement to the imagination of those poets as rhyme to ours; and yet you find Ovid saying too much on every subject. *Nescivit* (says Seneca) *quod bene cessit relinquare*:¹ of which he gives you one famous instance in his description of the deluge:

Omnia pontus erat, deerant quoque litora ponto.
Now all was sea, nor had that sea a shore.

Thus Ovid's fancy was not limited by verse, and Virgil needed not verse to have bounded his.

"In our own language we see Ben Jonson confining himself to what ought to be said, even in the liberty of blank verse; and yet Corneille,² the most judicious of the French poets, is still varying the same sense in hundred ways, and dwelling eternally on the same subject, though confined by rhyme. Some other exceptions I have to verse; but since these I have named are for the most part already public, I conceive it reasonable they should first be answered."

"It concerns me less than any," said Neander (seeing he had ended), "to reply to this discourse; because when I should have proved that verse may be natural in plays, yet I should always be ready to confess, that those which I have written in this kind³ come short of that perfection which is required. Yet since you are pleased I should undertake this province, I will do it, though with all imaginable respect and deference, both to that person from whom you have borrowed your strongest arguments, and to whose judgment, when I have said all, I finally submit. But before I proceed to answer your objections, I must first remember you, that I exclude all comedy from my defence; and next that I deny not but blank verse may be also used; and content myself only to assert, that in serious plays where the subject and characters are great, and the plot unmixed with mirth, which might allay or divert these concerns which are produced, rhyme is there as natural and more effectual than blank verse."

"And now having laid down this as a

foundation, — to begin with Crites, — I must crave leave to tell him, that some of his arguments against rhyme reach no farther than, from the faults or defects of ill rhyme; to conclude against the use of it in general. May not I conclude against blank verse by the same reason? If the words of some poets who write in it are either ill chosen, or ill placed, which makes not only rhyme, but all kind of verse in any language unnatural, shall I, for their vicious affectation, condemn those excellent lines of Fletcher, which are written in that kind? Is there anything in rhyme more constrained than this line in blank verse? — *I heaven invoke, and strong resistance make*; where you see both the clauses are placed unnaturally, that is, contrary to the common way of speaking, and that without the excuse of a rhyme to cause it: yet you would think me very ridiculous, if I should accuse the stubbornness of blank verse for this, and not rather the stiffness of the poet. Therefore, Crites, you must either prove that words, though well chosen, and duly placed, yet render not rhyme natural in itself; or that, however natural and easy the rhyme may be, yet it is not proper for a play. If you insist on the former part, I would ask you, what other conditions are required to make rhyme natural in itself, besides an election of apt words, and a right disposition of them? For the due choice of your words expresses your sense naturally, and the due placing them adapts the rhyme to it. If you object that one verse may be made for the sake of another, though both the words and rhyme be apt, I answer, it cannot possibly so fall out; for either there is a dependence of sense betwixt the first line and the second, or there is none: if there be that connection, then in the natural position of the words the latter line must of necessity flow from the former; if there be no dependence, yet still the due ordering of words makes the last line as natural in itself as the other: so that the necessity of a rhyme never forces any but bad or lazy writers to say what they would not otherwise. 'Tis true, there is both care and art required to write in verse. A good poet never establishes the first line till he has sought out such a rhyme as may fit the sense, already prepared to heighten the second: many times the close of the sense falls into the middle of the next verse, or farther off, and he may often prevail himself of the same advantages in English which Virgil had in Latin, — he may break off in the hemistich,⁴

¹ half line.

¹ He did not know when to leave off.

² The well-known French tragic dramatist, 1606–84.

³ In Dryden's best play, *All for Love*, he abandoned heroic couplets, which he is here defending, in favor of blank verse.

and begin another line. Indeed, the not observing these two last things makes plays which are writ in verse so tedious: for though, most commonly, the sense is to be confined to the couplet, yet nothing that does *perpetuo* *tenore fluere*,¹ run in the same channel, can please always. 'Tis like the murmuring of a stream, which not varying in the fall, causes at first attention, at last drowsiness. Variety of cadences is the best rule; the greatest help to the actors, and refreshment to the audience.

"If, then, verse may be made natural in itself, how becomes it unnatural in a play? You say the stage is the representation of nature, and no man in ordinary conversation speaks in rhyme. But you foresaw when you said this, that it might be answered — neither does any man speak in blank verse, or in measure without rhyme. Therefore you concluded, that which is nearest nature is still to be preferred. But you took no notice that rhyme might be made as natural as blank verse, by the well placing of the words, etc. All the difference between them, when they are both correct, is, the sound in one, which the other wants; and if so, the sweetness of it, and all the advantage resulting from it, which are handled in the Preface to *The Rival Ladies*,² will yet stand good. As for that place of Aristotle, where he says, plays should be writ in that kind of verse which is nearest prose, it makes little for you; blank verse being properly but measured prose. Now measure alone, in any modern language, does not constitute verse; those of the ancients in Greek and Latin consisted in quantity of words, and a determinate number of feet. But when, by the inundation of the Goths and Vandals into Italy, new languages were introduced, and barbarously mingled with the Latin, of which the Italian, Spanish, French, and ours (made out of them and the Teutonic) are dialects, a new way of poesy was practised; new, I say, in those countries, for in all probability it was that of the conquerors in their own nations: at least we are able to prove, that the eastern people have used it from all antiquity. This new way consisted in measure or number of feet, and rhyme; the sweetness of rhyme, and observation of accent, supplying the place of quantity in words, which could neither exactly be observed by those barbarians, who knew not the rules of it, neither was it suitable to their tongues, as it had been to the Greek and Latin. No man is tied in modern poesy to

observe any farther rule in the feet of his verse, but that they be dissyllables; whether Spondee, Trochee, or Iambic, it matters not; only he is obliged to rhyme: neither do the Spanish, French, Italian, or Germans, acknowledge at all, or very rarely, any such kind of poesy as blank verse amongst them. Therefore, at most 'tis but a poetic prose, a *sermo pedestris*; and as such, most fit for comedies, where I acknowledge rhyme to be improper. — Farther: as to that quotation of Aristotle, our couplet verses may be rendered as near prose as blank verse itself, by using those advantages I lately named, — as breaks in an hemistich, or running the sense into another line, — thereby making art and order appear as loose and free as nature: or not tying ourselves to couplets strictly, we may use the benefit of the Pindaric way practised in *The Siege of Rhodes*,³ where the numbers vary, and the rhyme is disposed carelessly, and far from often chiming. Neither is that other advantage of the ancients to be despised, of changing the kind of verse when they please, with the change of the scene, or some new entrance; for they confine not themselves always to iambics, but extend their liberty to all lyric numbers, and sometimes even to hexameter. But I need not go so far to prove that rhyme, as it succeeds to all other offices of Greek and Latin verse, so especially to this of plays, since the custom of nations at this day confirms it; the French, Italian, and Spanish tragedies are generally writ in it; and sure the universal consent of the most civilised parts of the world, ought in this, as it doth in other customs, to include the rest.

"But perhaps you may tell me, I have proposed such a way to make rhyme natural, and consequently proper to plays, as is unpracticable; and that I shall scarce find six or eight lines together in any play, where the words are so placed and chosen as is required to make it natural. I answer, no poet need constrain himself at all times to it. It is enough he makes it his general rule; for I deny not but sometimes there may be a greatness in placing the words otherwise; and sometimes they may sound better; sometimes also the variety itself is excuse enough. But if, for the most part, the words be placed as they are in the negligence of prose, it is sufficient to denominate the way practicable; for we esteem that to be such, which in the trial oftener succeeds than misses. And thus far you may find the practice made good in many

¹ flow in an even stream.

² One of Dryden's first plays, a tragicomedy.

³ Davenant's play, the first English opera, 1656.

plays: where you do not, remember still, that if you cannot find six natural rhymes together, it will be as hard for you to produce as many lines in blank verse, even among the greatest of our poets, against which I cannot make some reasonable exception.

"And this, Sir, calls to my remembrance the beginning of your discourse, where you told us we should never find the audience favorable to this kind of writing, till we could produce as good plays in rhyme as Ben Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakespeare had writ out of it. But it is to raise envy to the living, to compare them with the dead. They are honored, and almost adored by us, as they deserve; neither do I know any so presumptuous of themselves as to contend with them. Yet give me leave to say thus much, without injury to their ashes; that not only we shall never equal them, but they could never equal themselves, were they to rise and write again. We acknowledge them our fathers in wit; but they have ruined their estates themselves, before they came to their children's hands. There is scarce an humor, a character, or any kind of plot, which they have not used. All comes sullied or wasted to us: and were they to entertain this age, they could not now make so plenteous treatments out of such decayed fortunes. This therefore will be a good argument to us, either not to write at all, or to attempt some other way. There is no bays to be expected in their walks: *tentanda via est, qua me quoque possum tollere humo*.¹

"This way of writing in verse they have only left free to us; our age is arrived to a perfection in it, which they never knew; and which (if we may guess by what of theirs we have seen in verse, as *The Faithful Shepherdess*,² and *Sad Shepherd*.)³ 'tis probable they never could have reached. For the genius of every age is different; and though ours excel in this, I deny not but to imitate nature in that perfection which they did in prose, is a greater commendation than to write in verse exactly. As for what you have added — that the people are not generally inclined to like this way, — if it were true, it would be no wonder, that betwixt the shaking off an old habit, and the introducing of a new, there should be difficulty. Do we not see them stick to Hopkins' and Sternhold's psalms,⁴ and forsake those of David,

I mean Sandys¹ his translation of them? If by the people you understand the multitude, the *οἱ πολλοί*,² 'tis no matter what they think; they are sometimes in the right, sometimes in the wrong: their judgment is a mere lottery. *Est ubi plebs recte putat, est ubi peccat*.³ Horace says it of the vulgar, judging poesy. But if you mean the mixed audience of the populace and the noblesse, I dare confidently affirm that a great part of the latter sort are already favorable to verse; and that no serious plays written since the king's return have been more kindly received by them than *The Siege of Rhodes*,⁴ the *Mustapha*,⁵ *The Indian Queen*,⁶ and *Indian Emperor*.⁷

"But I come now to the inference of your first argument. You said that the dialogue of plays is presented as the effect of sudden thought, but no man speaks suddenly, or *extempore*, in rhyme; and you inferred from thence, that rhyme, which you acknowledge to be proper to epic poesy, cannot equally be proper to dramatic, unless we could suppose all men born so much more than poets, that verses should be made in them, not by them.

"It has been formerly urged by you, and confessed by me, that since no man spoke any kind of verse *extempore*, that which was nearest nature was to be preferred. I answer you, therefore, by distinguishing betwixt what is nearest to the nature of comedy, which is the imitation of common persons and ordinary speaking, and what is nearest the nature of a serious play: this last is indeed the representation of nature, but 'tis nature wrought up to a higher pitch. The plot, the characters, the wit, the passions, the descriptions, are all exalted above the level of common converse, as high as the imagination of the poet can carry them, with proportion to verisimilitude. Tragedy, we know, is wont to image to us the minds and fortunes of noble persons, and to portray these exactly; heroic rhyme is nearest nature, as being the noblest kind of modern verse.

Indignatur enim privatis et prope socco
Dignis carminibus narrari cœna Thyestæ⁸

¹ Sandys, who for a while was connected with the Virginia colony, made a paraphrase in verse of the Psalms as well as of the Canticles.

² Literally, the many; the common people or multitude.

³ When the common people think correctly, it is then that they are wrong.

⁴ By Davenant.

⁵ By Roger Boyle, first Earl of Orrery.

⁶ By Dryden and Sir Robert Howard, the Critics in this essay.

⁷ By Dryden.

⁸ From Horace, *Ars Poetica*: The Thyestean feast no less disdains, The vulgar vehicle of comic strains. (Conington.)

¹ A path must be tried where I too can rise from the earth. (Virgil, *Georgics*, III.)

² By Fletcher.

³ Jonson's last, uncompleted play.

⁴ Hopkins and Sternhold together translated the Psalms into verse in the first half of the sixteenth century.

says Horace: and in another place,

Effutire leves indigna tragœdia versus.¹

Blank verse is acknowledged to be too low for a poem, nay more, for a paper of verses; but if too low for an ordinary sonnet, how much more for tragedy, which is by Aristotle, in the dispute betwixt the epic poesy and the dramatic, for many reasons he there alleges, ranked above it?

"But setting this defence aside, your argument is almost as strong against the use of rhyme in poems as in plays; for the epic way is everywhere interlaced with dialogue, or discursive scenes; and therefore you must either grant rhyme to be improper there, which is contrary to your assertion, or admit it into plays by the same title which you have given it to poems. For though tragedy be justly preferred above the other, yet there is a great affinity between them, as may easily be discovered in that definition of a play which Lisiideus gave us. The *genus* of them is the same — a just and lively image of human nature, in its actions, passions, and traverses of fortune: so is the end — namely, for the delight and benefit of mankind. The characters and persons are still the same, viz., the greatest of both sorts; only the manner of acquainting us with those actions, passions, and fortunes, is different. Tragedy performs it *viva voce*, or by action, in dialogue; wherein it excels the epic poem, which does it chiefly by narration, and therefore is not so lively an image of human nature." However, the agreement betwixt them is such, that if rhyme be proper for one, it must be for the other. Verse, 'tis true, is not the effect of sudden thought; but this hinders not that sudden thought may be represented in verse, since those thoughts are such as must be higher than nature can raise them without premeditation, especially to a continuance of them, even out of verse; and consequently you cannot imagine them to have been sudden either in the poet or in the actors. A play, as I have said, to be like nature, is to be set above it; as statues which are placed on high are made greater than the life, that they may descend to the sight in their just proportion.

"Perhaps I have insisted too long on this objection; but the clearing of it will make my stay shorter on the rest. You tell us, Crites, that rhyme appears most unnatural in repartees, or short replies: when he who answers (it being presumed he knew not what

the other would say, yet) makes up that part of the verse which was left incomplete, and supplies both the sound and measure of it. This, you say, looks rather like the confederacy of two, than the answer of one.

"This, I confess, is an objection which is in every man's mouth, who loves not rhyme: but suppose, I beseech you, the repartee were made only in blank verse, might not part of the same argument be turned against you? for the measure is as often supplied there as it is in rhyme; the latter half of the hemistich as commonly made up, or a second line subjoined as a reply to the former; which any one leaf in Jonson's plays will sufficiently clear to you. You will often find in the Greek tragedians, and in Seneca, that when a scene grows up into the warmth of repartees which is the close fighting of it, the latter part of the trimeter is supplied by him who answers; and yet it was never observed as a fault in them by any of the ancient or modern critics. The case is the same in our verse, as it was in theirs; rhyme to us being in lieu of quantity to them. But if no latitude is to be allowed a poet, you take from him not only his licence of *quidlibet audendi*,¹ but you tie him up in a straiter compass than you would a philosopher. This is indeed *Musas colere severiores*.² You would have him follow nature, but he must follow her on foot: you have dismounted him from his Pegasus. But you tell us, this supplying the last half of a verse, or adjoining a whole second to the former, looks more like the design of two, than the answer of one. Suppose we acknowledge it: how comes this confederacy to be more displeasing to you, than in a dance which is well contrived? You see there the united design of many persons to make up one figure; after they have separated themselves in many petty divisions, they rejoin one by one into a gross: the confederacy is plain amongst them, for chance could never produce anything so beautiful; and yet there is nothing in it that shocks your sight. I acknowledge the hand of art appears in repartee, as of necessity it must in all kind of verse. But there is also the quick and poignant brevity of it (which is an high imitation of nature in those sudden gusts of passion) to mingle with it; and this, joined with the cadency and sweetness of the rhyme, leaves nothing in the soul of the hearer to desire. 'Tis an art which appears; but it appears only like the shadowings of painture, which being

¹ of trying anything.

² cultivating the very stern Muses.

¹ Light verses, poured forth, are not befitting to tragedy.

to cause the rounding of it, cannot be absent; but while that is considered, they are lost: so while we attend to the other beauties of the matter, the care and labor of the rhyme is carried from us, or at least drowned in its own sweetness, as bees are sometimes buried in their honey. When a poet has found the repartee, the last perfection he can add to it, is to put it into verse. However good the thought may be, however apt the words in which 'tis couched, yet he finds himself at a little unrest, while rhyme is wanting: he cannot leave it till that comes naturally, and then is at ease, and sits down contented.

"From replies, which are the most elevated thoughts of verse, you pass to those which are most mean, and which are common with the lowest of household conversation. In these, you say, the majesty of verse suffers. You instance in the calling of a servant, or commanding a door to be shut, in rhyme. This, Crites, is a good observation of yours, but no argument: for it proves no more but that such thoughts should be waived, as often as may be, by the address of the poet. But suppose they are necessary in the places where he uses them, yet there is no need to put them into rhyme. He may place them in the beginning of a verse, and break it off, as unfit, when so debased, for any other use: or granting the worst, — that they require more room than the hemistich will allow, yet still there is a choice to be made of the best words, and least vulgar (provided they be apt), to express such thoughts. Many have blamed rhyme in general, for this fault, when the poet with a little care might have redressed it. But they do it with no more justice than if English poesy should be made ridiculous for the sake of the Water-poet's rhymes. Our language is noble, full, and significant; and I know not why he who is master of it may not clothe ordinary things in it as decently as the Latin, if he use the same diligence in his choice of words: *delectus verborum origo est eloquentiæ*.² It was the saying of Julius Cæsar, one so curious in his, that none of them can be changed but for a worse. One would think, *unlock the door*, was a thing as vulgar as could be spoken; and yet Seneca could make it sound high and lofty in his Latin:

Reserate clusos regii postes laris.
Set wide the palace gates.

"But in turn from this conception, both

¹ John Taylor (1580-1653), called the "Water Poet" because he had been a ferryman on the Thames.

² Choice of words is the source of eloquence.

because it happens not above twice or thrice in any play that those vulgar thoughts are used; and then too (were there no other apology to be made, yet), the necessity of them, which is alike in all kind of writing, may excuse them. For if they are little and mean in rhyme, they are, of consequence, such in blank verse. Besides that the great eagerness and precipitation with which they are spoken, makes us rather mind the substance than the dress; that for which they are spoken, rather than what is spoken. For they are always the effect of some hasty concernment, and something of consequence depends on them.

"Thus, Crites, I have endeavored to answer your objections; it remains only that I should vindicate an argument for verse, which you have gone about to overthrow. It had formerly been said that the easiness of blank verse renders the poet too luxuriant, but that the labor of rhyme bounds and circumscribes an over-fruitful fancy; the sense there being commonly confined to the couplet, and the words so ordered that the rhyme naturally follows them, not they the rhyme. To this you answered, that it was no argument to the question in hand; for the dispute was not which way a man may write best, but which is most proper for the subject on which he writes.

"First, give me leave, Sir, to remember you that the argument against which you raised this objection was only secondary: it was built on this hypothesis, — that to write in verse was proper for serious plays. Which supposition being granted (as it was briefly made out in that discourse, by showing how verse might be made natural), it asserted, that this way of writing was an help to the poet's judgment, by putting bounds to a wild overflowing fancy. I think, therefore, it will not be hard for me to make good what it was to prove on that supposition. But you add, that were this let pass, yet he who wants judgment in the liberty of his fancy, may as well show the defect of it when he is confined to verse; for he who has judgment will avoid errors, and he who has it not, will commit them in all kinds of writing.

"This argument, as you have taken it from a most acute person,¹ so I confess it carries much weight in it: but by using the word judgment here indefinitely, you seem to have put a fallacy upon us. I grant, he who has judgment, that is, so profound, so strong, or rather so infallible a judgment, that he needs

¹ Sir Robert Howard.

no helps to keep it always poised and upright, will commit no faults either in rhyme or out of it. And on the other extreme, he who has a judgment so weak and crazed that no helps can correct or amend it, shall write scurvily out of rhyme, and worse in it. But the first of these judgments is nowhere to be found, and the latter is not fit to write at all. To speak therefore of judgment as it is in the best poets; they who have the greatest proportion of it, want other helps than from it, within. As for example, you would be loth to say that he who is endued with a sound judgment has no need of history, geography, or moral philosophy, to write correctly. Judgment is indeed the master-workman in a play; but he requires many subordinate hands, many tools to his assistance. And verse I affirm to be one of these; 'tis a rule and line by which he keeps his building compact and even, which otherwise lawless imagination would raise either irregularly or loosely; at least, if the poet commits errors with this help, he would make greater and more without it: 'tis, in short, a slow and painful, but the surest kind of working. Ovid, whom you accuse for luxuriancy in verse, had perhaps been farther guilty of it, had he writ in prose. And for your instance of Ben Jonson, who, you say, writ exactly without the help of rhyme; you are to remember, 'tis only an aid to a luxuriant fancy, which his was not: as he did not want imagi-

nation, so none ever said he had much to spare. Neither was verse then refined so much, to be an help to that age, as it is to ours. Thus then the second thoughts being usually the best, as receiving the maturest digestion from judgment, and the last and most mature product of those thoughts being artful and labored verse, it may well be inferred, that verse is a great help to a luxuriant fancy; and this is what that argument which you opposed was to evince."

Neander was pursuing this discourse so eagerly that Eugenius had called to him twice or thrice, ere he took notice that the barge stood still, and that they were at the foot of Somersetstairs, where they had appointed it to land. The company were all sorry to separate so soon, though a great part of the evening was already spent; and stood a-while looking back on the water, upon which the moonbeams played, and made it appear like floating quicksilver: at last they went up through a crowd of French people, who were merrily dancing in the open air, and nothing concerned for the noise of guns¹ which had alarmed the town that afternoon. Walking thence together to the Piazzes, they parted there; Eugenius and Lisideus to some pleasant appointment they had made, and Crites and Neander to their several lodgings.

¹ Dryden began his essay: "It was that memorable day, in the first summer of the late war, when our navy engaged the Dutch." The noise of the battle could be heard easily in London.

JOHN BUNYAN (1628-1688)

John Bunyan, the son of a tinker, was born in the village of Elstow, in 1628. As a boy he took part in the Civil War, undoubtedly on the Parliamentary side. His real life, however, was in his religious experience, narrated in *Grace Abounding*. He married a pious woman who brought him as her dowry certain religious books. Reading these brought Bunyan into that agony of soul which, as with so many of his contemporaries, followed a conviction of sin and doubt as to salvation. Under the ministrations of Mr. Gifford, pastor of a Baptist congregation at Bedford, he became converted, and in turn began to preach the gospel. In 1660, after the Restoration, he was arrested under the law which prohibited religious meetings except those of the Established Church, and held in somewhat loose confinement for twelve years. After his release he resumed preaching, which he continued until his death in 1688.

Bunyan's writings are entirely concerned with what to him was the great reality of life, the relation of the soul to God. He began to write tracts shortly after his conversion, among which *A Few Sighs from Hell, or the Groans of a Damned Soul*, reminds us by its title of the fearful issue involved in this relation. During his imprisonment he published *Grace Abounding* (1666). The great religious allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, followed in 1678; *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* in 1680; and a second allegory, *The Holy War*, in 1682. *Grace Abounding*, of which the first third is here printed, is one of the most remarkable autobiographies ever written. It illustrates perfectly the spiritual excitement of the seventeenth century of which the Puritan character was the result. Bunyan's religious experience was intimate and personal, a quality reflected in his simple, realistic, homespun style. Woven through this groundwork, however, are strains of poetic splendor and beauty which Bunyan owed to his study of the King James Version of the Bible. This combina-

tion of naive reflection of life and richness of imagination gives to *The Pilgrim's Progress* its pre-eminence as an allegory.

Grace Abounding is edited by E. C. Baldwin in Ginn's Standard English Classics; *The Pilgrim's Progress*, by W. V. Moody, in the Riverside Literature Series. Lives of Bunyan by Robert Southey, by John Brown, by J. A. Froude (English Men of Letters Series), and E. Venables (Great Writers Series) are available. The essays by Macaulay, John Tulloch (*Puritanism and Its Leaders*), and Edward Dowden (*Puritan and Anglican*) may be noted.

GRACE ABOUNDING TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS

OR,

A BRIEF RELATION OF THE EXCEEDING
MERCY OF GOD IN CHRIST, TO HIS POOR
SERVANT, JOHN BUNYAN

In this my relation of the merciful working of God upon my soul, it will not be amiss, if, in the first place, I do, in a few words, give you a hint of my pedigree, and manner of bringing up; that thereby the goodness and bounty of God towards me, may be the more advanced and magnified before the sons of men.

For my descent then, it was, as is well known by many, of a low and inconsiderable generation; my father's house being of that rank that is meanest, and most despised of all the families in the land. Wherefore I have not here, as others, to boast of noble blood, or of a high-born state, according to the flesh; though, all things considered, I magnify the heavenly Majesty, for that by this door he brought me into this world, to partake of the grace and life that is in Christ by the Gospel.

But yet, notwithstanding the meanness and inconsiderableness of my parents, it pleased God to put it into their hearts to put me to school, to learn both to read and write; the which I also attained, according to the rate of other poor men's children, though to my shame I confess, I did soon lose that little I learnt, even almost utterly, and that long before the Lord did work his gracious work of conversion upon my soul.

As for my own natural life, for the time that I was without God in the world, it was, indeed, "according to the course of this world, and the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."¹ It was my delight to be "taken captive by the devil at his will,"² being filled with all unrighteousness; the which did also so strongly work, and put forth itself, both in my heart and life, and that from a child, that I had but few equals (especially considering my years, which

were tender, being few), both for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God.

Yea, so settled and rooted was I in these things, that they became as a second nature to me. The which, as I also have with soberness considered since, did so offend the Lord, that even in my childhood he did scare and affright me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with dreadful visions. For often, after I had spent this and the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, labored to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid.

Also I should, at these years, be greatly afflicted and troubled with the thoughts of the Day of Judgment, and that both night and day, and should tremble at the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell-fire; still fearing that it would be my lot to be found at last among those devils and hellish fiends, who are there bound down with the chains and bonds of darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.

These things, I say, when I was but a child, about nine or ten years old, did so distress my soul, that then, in the midst of my many sports and childish vanities, amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down, and afflicted in my mind therewith, yet could I not let go my sins. Yea, I was also then so overcome with despair of life and heaven, that I should often wish, either that there had been no hell, or that I had been a devil; supposing they were only tormentors; that if it must needs be, that I went thither, I might be rather a tormentor, than be tormented myself.

A while after, these terrible dreams did leave me, which also I soon forgot; for my pleasures did quickly cut off the remembrance of them, as if they had never been. Wherefore with more greediness, according to the strength of nature, I did still let loose the reins to my lust, and delighted in all transgression against the law of God: so that until I came to the state of marriage, I was the very ringleader of all the youth that

¹ Ephesians II, 2, 3.

² II Timothy II, 26.

³⁰

kept me company, in all manner of vice and ungodliness.

Yea, such prevalency had the lusts and fruits of the flesh in this poor soul of mine, that had not a miracle of precious grace prevented, I had not only perished by the stroke of eternal justice, but had also laid myself open even to the stroke of those laws which bring some to disgrace and open shame before the face of the world.

In these days the thoughts of religion were very grievous to me. I could neither endure it myself, nor that any other should. So that when I have seen some read in those books that concerned Christian piety, it would be as it were a prison to me. Then I said unto God, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways."¹ I was now void of all good consideration, heaven and hell were both out of sight and mind; and as for saving and damning, they were least in my thoughts. "O Lord, thou knowest my life, and my ways were not hid from thee."

Yet this I well remember, that though I could myself sin with the greatest delight and ease, and also take pleasure in the villainess of my companions; yet, even then, if I had at any time seen wicked things, by those who professed goodness, it would make my spirit tremble. As once above all the rest, when I was in my height of vanity, yet hearing one to swear that was reckoned for a religious man, it had so great a stroke upon my spirit, that it made my heart to ake.

But God did not utterly leave me, but followed me still, not now with convictions, but judgments; yet such as were mixed with mercy. For once I fell into a crick of the sea, and hardly escaped drowning. Another time I fell out of a boat into Bedford river, but mercy yet preserved me alive. Besides, another time, being in the field with one of my companions, it chanced that an adder passed over the highway; so I having a stick in my hand, struck her over the back, and having stunned her, I forced open her mouth with my stick, and plucked her sting out with my fingers; by which act, had not God been merciful unto me, I might, by my desperation, have brought myself to mine end.

This also have I taken notice of with thanksgiving. When I was a soldier, I, with others, were drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it; but when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room; to which, when I had consented, he took my place; and coming to the siege, as he

stood sentinel, he was shot into the head with a musket bullet, and died.

Here, as I said, were judgments and mercy, but neither of them did awaken my soul to righteousness; wherefore I sinned still, and grew more and more rebellious against God, and careless of mine own salvation.

Presently after this, I changed my condition into a married state, and my mercy was to light upon a wife whose father was counted godly. This woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be (not having so much household stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us both), yet this she had for her part, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*, and *The Practice of Piety*, which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I should sometimes read with her, wherein I also found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me; (but all this while I met with no conviction). She also would be often telling of me what a godly man her father was, and how he would reprove and correct vice, both in his house, and amongst his neighbors; what a strict and holy life he lived in his days, both in word and deed.

Wherefore these books, with this relation, though they did not reach my heart, to awaken it about my sad and sinful state, yet they did beget within me some desires to religion: so that, because I knew no better, I fell in very eagerly with the religion of the times; to wit, to go to church twice a day, and that too with the foremost; and there should very devoutly both say and sing as others did, yet retaining my wicked life. But withal, I was so overrun with the spirit of superstition, that I adored, and that with great devotion, even all things (both the high place, priest, clerk, vestments, service, and what else) belonging to the church; counting all things holy that were therein contained, and especially, the priest and clerk most happy, and without doubt greatly blessed, because they were the servants, as I then thought, of God, and were principal in the holy temple to do his work therein.

This conceit grew so strong in little time upon my spirit, that had I but seen a priest (though never so sordid and debauched in his life), I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence him, and knit unto him. Yea, I thought, for the love I did bear unto them (supposing they were the ministers of God) I could have lain down at their feet and have been trampled upon by them; their name, their garb, and work did so intoxicate and bewitch me.

After I had been thus for some considerable time, another thought came in my mind; and that was, whether we were of the Israelites or no? For finding in the Scriptures that they were once the peculiar people of God, thought I, if I were once of this race, my soul must needs be happy. Now again, I found within me a great longing to be resolved about this question, but could not tell how I should. At last I asked my father of it, who told me, no, we were not. Wherefore, then I fell in my spirit as to the hopes of that and so remained.

But all this while, I was not sensible of the danger and evil of sin. I was kept from considering that sin would damn me, what religion soever I followed, unless I was found in Christ. Nay, I never thought of him, nor whether there was such an one, or not. "Thus man while blind doth wander, but wearie himself with vanity, for he knoweth not the way to the city of God."¹

But one day, amongst all the sermons our parson made, his subject was to treat of the sabbath-day, and of the evil of breaking that, either with labor, sports, or otherwise. Now I was, notwithstanding my religion, one that took much delight in all manner of vice, and especially, that was the day that I did solace myself therewith. Wherefore I fell in my conscience under his sermon, thinking and believing that he made that sermon on purpose to show me my evil-doing. And at that time I felt what guilt was, though never before, that I can remember. But then I was, for the present, greatly loaden therewith, and so went home when the sermon was ended, with a great burden upon my spirit.

This, for that instant, did benumb the sinews of my best delights, and did imbitter my former pleasures to me. But behold, it lasted not; for before I had well dined, the trouble began to go off my mind, and my heart returned to its old course. But oh! how glad was I, that this trouble was gone from me, and that the fire was put out, that I might sin again without control! Wherefore, when I had satisfied nature with my food, I shook the sermon out of my mind, and to my old custom of sports and gaming I returned with great delight.

But the same day, as I was in the midst of a game at Cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole, just as I was about to strike it the second time, a voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul, which said, "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have

thy sins and go to hell?" At this I was put to an exceeding maze. Wherefore, leaving my cat upon the ground, I looked up to heaven, and was as if I had, with the eyes of my understanding, seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if he did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for these and other my ungodly practices.

I had no sooner thus conceived in my mind, but suddenly this conclusion was fastened on my spirit, (for the former hint did set my sins again before my face) that I had been a great and grievous sinner, and that it was now too late for me to look after heaven; for Christ would not forgive me, nor pardon my transgressions. Then I fell to musing upon this also. And while I was thinking of it, and fearing lest it should be so, I felt my heart sink in despair, concluding it was too late; and therefore I resolved in my mind I would go on in sin. For, thought I, if the case be thus, my state is surely miserable; miserable if I leave my sins, and but miserable if I follow them. I can but be damned, and if I must be so, I had as good be damned for many sins, as be damned for a few.

Thus I stood in the midst of my play, before all that then were present; but yet I told them nothing. But I say, I having made this conclusion, I returned desperately to my sport again; and I well remember, that presently this kind of despair did so possess my soul, that I was persuaded I could never attain to other comfort than what I should get in sin; for heaven was gone already, so that on that I must not think. Wherefore I found within me a great desire to take my fill of sin, still studying what sin was yet to be committed, that I might taste the sweetness of it. And I made as much haste as I could to fill my belly with its delicacies, lest I should die before I had my desire; for that I feared greatly. In these things, I protest before God I lie not, neither do I feign this sort of speech. These were really, strongly, and with all my heart, my desires. The good Lord, whose mercy is unsearchable, forgive me my transgressions!

And I am very confident that this temptation of the devil is more usual amongst poor creatures than many are aware of, even to overrun their spirits with a scurfy and seared frame of heart, and benumbing of conscience; which frame he stilly and slyly supplieth with such despair, that though not much guilt attendeth souls, yet they continually have a secret conclusion within them, that

¹ Ecclesiastes x, 15.

there is no hopes for them; for they have loved sins, therefore after them they will go.¹

Now therefore I went on in sin with great greediness of mind, still grudging that I could not be so satisfied with it as I would. This did continue with me about a month, or more. But one day, as I was standing at a neighbor's shop-window, and there cursing and swearing, and playing the madman, after my wonted manner, there sat within the woman¹⁰ of the house, and heard me; who, though she was a very loose and ungodly wretch, yet protested that I swore and cursed at that most fearful rate, that she was made to tremble to hear me; and told me further, that I was¹⁵ the ungodliest fellow for swearing, that ever she heard in all her life; and that I, by thus doing, was able to spoil all the youth in the whole town, if they came but in my company.

At this reproof I was silenced, and put to²⁰ secret shame, and that too, as I thought, before the God of heaven. Wherefore, while I stood there, and hanging down my head, I wished with all my heart that I might be a little child again, that my father might learn²⁵ me to speak without this wicked way of swearing; for, thought I, I am so accustomed to it, that it is in vain for me to think of a reformation, for I thought it could never be.

But, how it came to pass I know not, I did³⁰ from this time forward so leave my swearing, that it was a great wonder to myself to observe it. And whereas before I knew not how to speak unless I put an oath before, and another behind, to make my words have³⁵ authority; now I could, without it, speak better, and with more pleasantness, than ever I could before. All this while I knew not Jesus Christ, neither did I leave my sports and plays.

But quickly after this, I fell in company with one poor man that made profession of religion; who, as I then thought, did talk pleasantly of the Scriptures, and of the matters of religion; wherefore, falling into some love and liking to what he said, I betook me⁴⁵ to my Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading; but especially with the historical part thereof. For, as for Paul's Epistles, and suchlike Scriptures, I could not away with⁵⁰ them, being as yet but ignorant, either of the corruptions of my nature or of the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save me.

Wherefore I fell to some outward reformation, both in my words and life, and did set⁵⁵ the commandments before me for my way to heaven; which commandments I also did

strive to keep, and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes, and then I should have comfort; yet now and then should break one, and so afflict my conscience; but then I should repent, and say I was sorry for it, and promise God to do better next time, and there get help again, for then I thought I pleased God as well as any man in England.

Thus I continued about a year; all which time our neighbors did take me to be a very godly man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to see such a great and famous alteration in my life and manners. And indeed so it was, though yet I knew not Christ, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope. And, truly, as I have well seen since, had I then died, my state had been most fearful. Well, this, I say, continued about a twelvemonth or⁶⁰ more.

But, I say, my neighbors were amazed at this my great conversion, from prodigious profaneness to something like a moral life. And truly, so they well might; for this my⁶⁵ conversion was as great, as for Tom of Bethlem to become a sober man. Now therefore they began to praise, to commend, and to speak well of me, both to my face, and behind my back. Now I was, as they said, become godly; now I was become a right honest man. But oh! when I understood that these were their words and opinions of me, it pleased me mighty well. For though, as yet, I was nothing but a poor painted hypocrite, yet I⁷⁰ loved to be talked of as one that was truly godly. I was proud of my godliness, and indeed I did all I did, either to be seen of, or to be well spoken of, by men; and thus I continued for about a twelvemonth, or more.

Now you must know, that before this I had⁷⁵ taken much delight in ringing, but my conscience beginning to be tender, I thought such practice was but vain, and therefore forced myself to leave it, yet my mind hankered. Wherefore, I should go to the⁸⁰ steeple house and look on it, though I durst not ring. But I thought this did not become religion neither, yet I forced myself, and would look on still. But quickly after, I⁸⁵ began to think, how if one of the bells should fall? Then I chose to stand under a main beam, that lay overthwart the steeple, from side to side, thinking there I might stand sure. But then I should think again, should the bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me, might⁹⁰ kill me for all this beam. This made me stand in the steeple-door; and now, thought

I, I am safe enough; for if a bell should then fall I can slip out behind these thick walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding.

So after this I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go further than the steeple-door; but then it came into my head, how if the steeple itself should fall? And this thought, It may fall for ought I know, when I stood and looked on, did continually so shake my mind, that I durst not stand at the steeple-door any longer, but was forced to flee, for fear the steeple should fall upon my head.

Another thing was my dancing. I was a full year before I could quite leave that. But all this while, when I thought I kept this or that commandment, or did, by word or deed anything that I thought was good, I had great peace in my conscience; and should think with myself, God cannot choose but be now pleased with me; yea, to relate it in mine own way, I thought no man in England could please God better than I.

But poor wretch as I was, I was all this while ignorant of Jesus Christ, and going about to establish my own righteousness; and had perished therein, had not God in mercy showed me more of my state by nature.

But upon a day, the good providence of God did cast me to Bedford, to work on my calling, and in one of the streets of that town, I came where there were three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, talking about the things of God; and being now willing to hear them discourse, I drew near to hear what they said, for I was now a brisk talker also myself, in the matters of religion. But I may say, "I heard, but I understood not;" for they were far above, out of my reach. Their talk was about a new birth, the work of God on their hearts, also how they were convinced of their miserable state by nature. They talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted and supported against the temptations of the devil. Moreover they reasoned of the suggestions and temptations of Satan in particular; and told to each other by which they had been afflicted, and how they were borne up under his assaults. They also discoursed of their own wretchedness of heart, of their unbelief; and did condemn, slight and abhor their own righteousness, as filthy and insufficient to do them any good.

And methought they spake as if joy did

make them speak; they spake with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me, as if they had found a new world; as if they were "people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned amongst their neighbors."¹

At this I felt my own heart began to shake, and mistrust my condition to be naught; for I saw that in all my thoughts about religion and salvation, the new birth did never enter into my mind; neither knew I the comfort of the word and promise, nor the deceitfulness and treachery of my own wicked heart. As for secret thoughts, I took no notice of them; neither did I understand what Satan's temptations were, nor how they were to be withstood and resisted, &c.

Thus, therefore, when I had heard and considered what they said, I left them, and went about my employment again, but their talk and discourse went with me; also my heart would tarry with them, for I was greatly affected with their words, both because by them I was convinced that I wanted the true tokens of a truly godly man, and also because by them I was convinced of the happy and blessed condition of him that was such an one.

Therefore I should often make it my business to be going again and again into the company of these poor people; for I could not stay away; and the more I went amongst them the more I did question my condition; and as I still do remember, presently I found two things within me, at which I did sometimes marvel, (especially considering what a blind, ignorant, sordid, and ungodly wretch but just before I was); the one was a very great softness and tenderness of heart, which caused me to fall under the conviction of what by Scripture they asserted; and the other was a great bending in my mind, to continual meditating on them, and on all other good things which at any time I heard or read of.

By these things my mind was now so turned that it lay like a horse-leech at the vein, still crying out, *Give, give*²; yea, it was so fixed on eternity, and on the things about the kingdom of heaven, (that is, so far as I knew, though as yet, God knows, I knew but little); that neither pleasures, nor profits, nor persuasions, nor threats could loose it, or make it let go his hold. And though I may speak it with shame, yet it is in very deed a certain truth, it would then have been as

¹ Numbers XXIII, 9.

² Proverbs xxx, 15.

difficult for me to have taken my mind from heaven to earth, as I have found it often since to get it again from earth to heaven.

One thing I may not omit. There was a young man in our town, to whom my heart was knit more than to any other, but he being a most wicked creature for cursing and swearing and whoring, I now shook him off and forsook his company; but about a quarter of a year after I had left him, I met him in a certain lane, and asked him how he did; he, after his old swearing and mad way, answered, he was well. "But, Harry," said I, "Why do you swear and curse thus? What will become of you if you die in this condition?" He answered me in a great chafe, "What would the devil do for company, if it were not for such as I am?"

About this time I met with some Ranters' books, that were put forth by some of our countrymen, which books were also highly in esteem by several old professors;¹ some of these I read, but was not able to make a judgment about them. Wherefore as I read in them, and thought upon them (feeling myself unable to judge), I should betake myself to hearty prayer in this manner: "O Lord, I am a fool, and not able to know the truth from error. Lord, leave me not to my own blindness, either to approve of, or condemn this doctrine; if it be of God, let me not despise it; if it be of the devil, let me not embrace it. Lord, I lay my soul in this matter only at thy foot; let me not be deceived, I humbly beseech thee." I had one religious intimate companion all this while, and that was the poor man that I spoke of before. But about this time, he also turned a most devilish Ranter, and gave himself up to all manner of filthiness, especially uncleanness. He would also deny that there was a God, angel, or spirit; and would laugh at all exhortations to sobriety. When I labored to rebuke his wickedness, he would laugh the more, and pretend that he had gone through all religions, and could never light on the right till now. He told me also, that in a little time I should see all professors turn to the ways of the Ranters. Wherefore, abominating these cursed principles, I left his company forthwith, and became to him as great a stranger, as I had been before a familiar.

Neither was this man only a temptation to me; but my calling lying in the country, I happened to light into several people's company, who, though strict in religion formerly, yet were also swept away by these Ranters.

¹ professing Christians.

These would also talk with me of their ways, and condemn me as legal and dark; pretending that they only had attained to perfection, that could do what they would and not sin. Oh! These temptations were suitable to my flesh, I being but a young man, and my nature in its prime. But God, who had, as I hope, designed me for better things, kept me in the fear of his name, and did not suffer me to accept of such cursed principles. And blessed be God, who put it into my heart to cry to him to be kept and directed, still distrusting mine own wisdom; for I have since seen even the effect of that prayer, in his preserving me, not only from Ranting errors, but from those also that have sprung up since. The Bible was precious to me in those days.

And now, methought, I began to look into the Bible with new eyes, and read as I never did before; and especially the epistles of the Apostle St. Paul were sweet and pleasant to me; and indeed I was then never out of the Bible, either by reading or meditation; still crying out to God that I might know the truth, and way to heaven and glory.

And as I went on and read, I lighted on that passage, "To one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit; and to another faith," &c.² And though, as I have since seen, that by this Scripture the Holy Ghost intends, in special things extraordinary, yet on me it then did fasten with conviction, that I did want things ordinary, even that understanding and wisdom that other Christians had. On this word I mused, and could not tell what to do; especially this word [*faith*] put me to it, for I could not help it, but sometimes must question, whether I had any faith, or no. For I feared it shut me out of all the blessings that other good people had given them of God. But I was loth to conclude I had no faith; for if I do so, thought I, then I shall count myself a very cast-away indeed.

No, said I, with myself, though I am convinced that I am an ignorant sot, and that I want those blessed gifts of knowledge and understanding that other good people have; yet at a venture, I will conclude I am not altogether faithless, though I know not what faith is. For it was showed me, and that too (as I have seen since) by Satan, that those who conclude themselves in a faithless state, have neither rest nor quiet in their souls; and I was loth to fall quite into despair.

Wherefore by this suggestion, I was for a

² 1 Corinthians xii, 8, 9.

while made afraid to see my want of faith. But God would not suffer me thus to undo and destroy my soul, but did continually, against this my blind and sad conclusion, create still within me such suppositions, in-
 5 somuch that I could not rest content, until I did now come to some certain knowledge, whether I had faith or no; this always run-
 ning in my mind, "But how if you want faith indeed? But how can you tell you have
 10 faith?" And besides, I saw for certain, if I had it not, I was sure to perish for ever.

So that though I endeavored at the first to look over the business of faith, yet in a little time, I better considering the matter, was
 15 willing to put myself upon the trial, whether I had faith or no. But alas, poor wretch, so ignorant and brutish was I, that I knew to this day no more how to do it, than I know
 20 how to begin and accomplish that rare and curious piece of art, which I never yet saw or considered.

Wherefore, while I was thus considering, and being put to my plunge about it (for you must know, that as yet I had in this mat-
 25 ter broken my mind to no man, only did hear and consider), the tempter came in with this delusion, "that there was no way for me to know I had faith, but by trying to work some
 30 miracle"; urging those Scriptures that seem to look that way, for the enforcing and strengthening his temptation. Nay, one day, as I was betwixt Elstow and Bedford, the
 temptation was hot upon me, to try if I had faith, by doing of some miracle; which mir-
 35 acle at that time was this, I must say to the puddles that were in the horse-pads, be dry; and to the dry places, be you the puddles. And truly, one time I was going to say so
 indeed; but just as I was about to speak, this
 40 thought came into my mind, "But go under yonder hedge and pray first, that God would make you able." But when I had concluded to pray, this came hot upon me, that if I
 prayed, and came again, and tried to do it, and yet did nothing notwithstanding, then
 45 be sure I had no faith, but was a cast-away, and lost. Nay, thought I, if it be so, I will never try yet, but will stay a little longer.

So I continued at a great loss; for I
 50 thought, if they only had faith, which could do so wonderful things, then I concluded, that, for the present, I neither had it, nor yet, for time to come, were ever like to have it. Thus I was tossed betwixt the devil and
 55 my own ignorance, and so perplexed, especially at some times, that I could not tell what to do.

About this time, the state and happiness of these poor people at Bedford was thus, in a dream or vision, presented to me. I saw as if they were set on the sunny side of some high
 5 mountain, there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow, and dark clouds. Methought also, betwixt me and them, I saw a
 10 wall that did compass about this mountain; now, through this wall, my soul did greatly desire to pass; concluding, that if I could, I would go even into the very midst of them, and there also comfort myself with the heat
 15 of their sun.

About this wall I thought myself to go again and again, still prying as I went, to see if I could find some way or passage, by which I might enter therein; but none could I find
 20 for some time. At the last, I saw, as it were, a narrow gap, like a little doorway in the wall, through which I attempted to pass. Now the passage being very straight and narrow, I made many offers to get in, but all
 25 in vain, even until I was well nigh quite beat out, by striving to get in. At last, with great striving, methought I at first did get in my head, and after that, by a sideling striving, my shoulders and my whole body. Then
 30 was I exceeding glad, and went and sat down in the midst of them, and so was comforted with the light and heat of their sun.

Now this mountain, and wall, &c., was thus made out to me: the mountain signified the church of the living God; the sun that shone thereon, the comfortable shining of his
 35 merciful face on them that were therein; the wall, I thought, was the word, that did make separation between the Christians and the world; and the gap which was in this wall, I
 40 thought, was Jesus Christ, who is the way to God the Father.¹ But forasmuch as the passage was wonderful narrow, even so narrow, that I could not but with great difficulty enter in thereat, it showed me, that
 45 none could enter into life, but those that were in downright earnest, and un'less also they left this wicked world behind them; for here was only room for body and soul, but not for
 50 body and soul, and sin.

This resemblance abode upon my spirit many days; all which time, I saw myself in a forlorn and sad condition, but yet was provoked to a vehement hunger and desire to be
 55 one of that number that did sit in the sunshine. Now also I should pray wherever I was, whether at home or abroad, in house or

¹ John XIV, 6; Matthew VII, 14.

field, and should also often, with lifting up of heart, sing that of the fifty-first Psalm, "O Lord, consider my distress;" for as yet I knew not where I was.

Neither as yet could I attain to any comfortable persuasion that I had faith in Christ; but instead of having satisfaction, here I began to find my soul to be assaulted with fresh doubts about my future happiness; especially with such as these, "Whether I was elected? But how if the day of grace should now be past and gone?"

By these two temptations I was very much afflicted and disquieted; sometimes by one and sometimes by the other of them. And first, to speak of that about my questioning my election, I found at this time that though I was in a flame to find the way to heaven and glory, and though nothing could beat me off from this, yet this question did so offend and discourage me, that I was, especially at some times, as if the very strength of my body also had been taken away by the force and power thereof. This Scripture did also seem to me to trample upon all my desires: "It is neither in him that willet, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy."

With this Scripture I could not tell what to do; for I evidently saw that unless the great God, of his infinite grace and bounty, had voluntarily chosen me to be a vessel of mercy, though I should desire and long and labor until my heart did break, no good could come of it. Therefore, this would still stick with me, "How can you tell you are elected? And what if you should not? How then?"

O Lord, thought I, what if I should not, indeed? It may be you are not, said the tempter; it may be so, indeed, thought I. Why then, said Satan, you had as good leave off, and strive no further; for if, indeed, you should not be elected and chosen of God, there is no talk of your being saved: "For it is neither in him that willet, nor in him that runneth; but in God that sheweth mercy."

By these things I was driven to my wits' end, not knowing what to say, or how to answer these temptations. (Indeed, I little thought that Satan had thus assaulted me, but that rather it was my own prudence, thus to start the question;) for, that the elect only obtained eternal life, that I, without scruple, did heartily close withal; but that myself was one of them, there lay all the question.

Thus, therefore, for several days, I was greatly assaulted and perplexed, and was

often, when I have been walking, ready to sink where I went, with faintness in my mind. But one day, after I had been so many weeks oppressed and cast down therewith, as I was now quite giving up the ghost of all my hopes of ever attaining life, that sentence fell with weight upon my spirit. "Look at the generations of old and see; did ever any trust in God, and were confounded?"

At which I was greatly lightened, and encouraged in my soul; for thus, at that very instant, it was expounded to me, "Begin at the beginning of Genesis, and read to the end of the Revelations, and see if you can find that there was ever any that trusted in the Lord, and was confounded." So, coming home, I presently went to my Bible, to see if I could find that saying, not doubting but to find it presently; for it was so fresh, and with such strength and comfort on my spirit, that I was as if it talked with me.

Well, I looked, but I found it not; only it abode upon me. Then I did ask first this good man, and then another, if they knew where it was, but they knew no such place. At this I wondered that such a sentence should so suddenly, and with such comfort and strength, seize and abide upon my heart, and yet that none could find it. For I doubted not but it was in holy Scripture.

Thus I continued above a year, and could not find the place; but at last, casting my eye into the Apocrypha books, I found it in Ecclesiasticus.¹ This, at the first, did somewhat daunt me; but because by this time I had got more experience of the love and kindness of God, it troubled me the less; especially when I considered that though it was not in those texts that we call holy and canonical, yet, forasmuch as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it. And I bless God for that word, for it was of God to me. That word doth still, at times, shine before my face.

After this, that other doubt did come with strength upon me, "But how if the day of grace should be past and gone? How if you have overstood the time of mercy?" Now, I remember that one day, as I was walking into the country, I was much in the thoughts of this, "But how if the day of grace be past?" And to aggravate my trouble, the tempter presented to my mind those good people of Bedford, and suggested thus unto me, that these being converted already, they were all that God would save in those parts;

¹ Romans IX, 16.

¹ Ecclesiasticus II, 10.

and that I came too late for these had got the blessing before I came.

Now was I in great distress, thinking in very deed that this might well be so. Wherefore I went up and down bemoaning my sad condition, counting myself far worse than a thousand fools, for standing off thus long, and spending so many years in sin as I have done; still crying out, Oh! that I had turned sooner! Oh! that I had turned seven years ago! It made me also angry with myself, to think that I should have no more wit, but to trifle away my time till my soul and heaven were lost.

But when I had been long vexed with this fear, and was scarce able to take one step more, just about the same place where I received my other encouragement, these words broke in upon my mind, "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled; and yet there is room."¹ These words, but especially them, "And yet there is room," were sweet words to me; for, truly, I thought that by them I saw that there was place enough in heaven for me; and, moreover, that when the Lord Jesus did speak these words, he then did think of me; and that he knowing the time would come that I should be afflicted with fear that there was no place left for me in his bosom, did before speak this word, and leave it upon record, that I might find help thereby against this vile temptation. This, I then verily believed.

In the light and encouragement of this word, I went a pretty while; and the comfort was the more, when I thought that the Lord Jesus should think on me so long ago, and that he should speak them words on purpose for my sake. For I did then think verily that he did on purpose speak them to encourage me withal.

But I was not without my temptations to go back again. Temptations, I say, both from Satan, mine own heart, and carnal acquaintance. But I thank God these were outweighed by that sound sense of death and of the day of judgment, which abode, as it were, continually in my view. I should often also think on Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is said, "He had given him all the kingdoms of the earth."² Yet, thought I, if this great man had all his portion in this world, one hour in hell-fire would make him forget all. Which consideration was a great help to me.

I was almost made, about this time, to see something concerning the beasts that Moses counted clean and unclean. I thought

those beasts were types of men; the clean, types of them that were the people of God; but the unclean, types of such as were the children of the wicked one. Now, I read that the clean beasts "chewed the cud;" that is, thought I, they show us, we must feed upon the word of God. They also "parted the hoof;" I thought that signified we must part, if we would be saved, with the ways of ungodly men. And also, in further reading about them I found, that though we did chew the cud as the hare, yet if we walked with claws like a dog, or if we did part the hoof like the swine, yet if we did not chew the cud as the sheep, we were still, for all that, but unclean;¹ for I thought the hare to be a type of those that talk of the word, yet walk in ways of sin; and that the swine was like him that parteth with his outward pollutions, but still wanteth the word of faith, without which there could be no way of salvation, let a man be never so devout. After this I found, by reading the word, that those that must be glorified with Christ in another world must be called by him here; called to the partaking of a share in his word and righteousness, and to the comforts and first-fruits of his Spirit, and to a peculiar interest in all those heavenly things which do indeed fore-fit the soul for that rest, and house of glory which is in heaven above.

Here, again, I was at a very great stand, not knowing what to do, fearing I was not called; "for," thought I, "if I be not called, what then can do me good? None but those who are effectually called, inherit the kingdom of heaven." But oh! how I now loved those words that spake of a Christian's calling! as when the Lord said to one, "Follow me," and to another, "Come after me." "And oh," thought I, "that he would say so to me too, how gladly would I run after him!"

I cannot now express with what longings and breathings in my soul I cried to Christ to call me. Thus I continued for a time, all on a flame to be converted to Jesus Christ; and did also see all that day, such glory in a converted state, that I could not be contented without a share therein. Gold! could it have been gotten for gold, what could I have given for it! Had I had a whole world, it had all gone ten thousand times over for this, that my soul might have been in a converted state.

How lovely now was every one in my eyes, that I thought to be converted men and

¹ Luke XIV, 22, 23.

² Daniel V, 18, 19.

¹ Deuteronomy XIV, 6, 8.

women! they shone, they walked like people that carried the broad seal of heaven about them. Oh! I saw the lot was fallen to them in pleasant places, and they had a goodly heritage.¹ But that which made me sick, was that of Christ, in Mark, "He went up into a mountain, and called to him whom he would, and they came unto him."²

This Scripture made me faint and fear, yet it kindled fire in my soul. That which made me fear was this, lest Christ should have no liking to me, for he called whom he would. But oh! the glory that I saw in that condition did still so engage my heart that I could seldom read of any that Christ did call but I presently wished, "Would I had been born in their clothes; would I had been born Peter; would I had been born John; or, would I had been by and had heard him when he called them, how would I have cried, O Lord, call me also!" But, oh! I feared he would not call me.

And truly, the Lord let me go thus many months together and showed me nothing, either that I was already, or should be called hereafter. But at last, after much time spent, and many groans to God, that I might be made partaker of the holy and heavenly calling, that word came in upon me: "I will cleanse their blood, that I have not cleansed, for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."³ These words I thought were sent to encourage me to wait still upon God, and signified unto me, that if I were not already, yet time might come, I might be in truth converted unto Christ.

About this time I began to break my mind to those poor people in Bedford, and to tell them my condition; which when they had heard, they told Mr. Gifford of me, who himself also took occasion to talk with me, and was willing to be well persuaded of me, though I think but from little grounds. But he invited me to his house, where I should hear him confer with others, about the dealings of God with their souls, from all which I still received more conviction, and from that time began to see something of the vanity and inward wretchedness of my wicked heart, for as yet I knew no great matter therein; but now it began to be discovered unto me, and also to work at that rate for wickedness as it never did before. Now I evidently found, that lusts and corruptions would strongly put forth themselves within me, in wicked thoughts and desires, which I did not regard before; my desires also for heaven

and life began to fail. I found also, that whereas before my soul was full of longings after God, now my heart began to hanker after every foolish vanity; yea, my heart would not be moved to mind that that was good; it began to be careless, both of my soul and heaven; it would now continually hang back, both to, and in every duty; and was as a clog on the leg of a bird, to hinder her from flying.

Nay, thought I, now I grow worse and worse; now am I farther from conversion than ever I was before. Wherefore I began to sink greatly in my soul, and began to entertain such discouragement in my heart as laid me as low as hell. If now I should have burned at the stake, I could not believe that Christ had love for me; alas, I could neither hear him, nor see him, nor feel him, nor savor any of his things. I was driven as with a tempest; my heart would be unclean: the Canaanites would dwell in the land.

Sometimes I would tell my condition to the people of God, which, when they heard, they would pity me, and would tell me of the promises. But they had as good have told me, that I must reach the sun with my finger as have bidden me receive or rely upon the promise; and as soon I should have done it, all my sense and feeling was against me; and I saw I had an heart that would sin, and that lay under a law that would condemn.

These things have often made me think of the child which the father brought to Christ, "who, while he was yet a coming to him, was thrown down by the devil,"¹ and also so rent and torn by him, that he lay and wallowed foaming."²

Further, in these days, I should find my heart to shut itself up against the Lord, and against his holy word. I have found my unbelief to set, as it were, the shoulder to the door to keep him out, and that too even then, when I have with many a bitter sigh cried, "Good Lord, break it open; Lord, break these gates of brass, and cut these bars of iron asunder."³ Yet that word would sometimes create in my heart a peaceable pause, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me."⁴

But all this while as to the act of sinning, I never was more tender than now. My hinder parts were inward. I durst not take a pin or stick, though but so big as a straw, for my conscience now was sore and would smart at every touch; I could not now tell how to

¹ Luke ix, 42.

³ Psalm cvii, 16.

² Mark ix, 20.

⁴ Isaiah xlv, 5.

¹ Psalm xvi, 6.

² Mark iii, 13.

³ Joel iii, 21.

speak my words, for fear I should misplace them. Oh, how gingerly did I then go in all I did or said! I found myself as on a miry bog that shook if I did but stir; and was as there left both of God and Christ, and the Spirit, and all good things.

But, I observe, though I was such a great sinner before conversion, yet God never much charged the guilt of the sins of my ignorance upon me; only he showed me I was lost if I had not Christ, because I had been a sinner. I saw that I wanted a perfect righteousness to present me without fault before God; and this righteousness was nowhere to be found, but in the person of Jesus Christ.

But my original and inward pollution, that, that was my plague and my affliction; that I say, at a dreadful rate, always putting forth itself within me; that I had the guilt of, to amazement; by reason of that, I was more loathsome in my own eyes than was a toad; and I thought I was so in God's eyes too. Sin and corruption, I said, would as naturally bubble out of my heart as water would bubble out of a fountain. I thought now that every one had a better heart than I had; and could have changed heart with any body. I thought none but the devil himself could equalize me for inward wickedness and pollution of mind. I fell, therefore, at the sight of my own vileness deeply into despair; for I concluded that this condition that I was in could not stand with a state of grace. Sure, thought I, I am forsaken of God; sure, I am given up to the devil, and to a reprobate mind. And thus I continued a long while, even for some years together.

While I was thus afflicted with the fears of my own damnation, there were two things would make me wonder; the one was, when I saw old people hunting after the things of this life, as if they should live here always; the other was, when I found professors most distressed and cast down, when they met with outward losses; as of husband, wife, child, &c. "Lord," thought I, "what ado is here about such little things as these! What seeking after carnal things by some, and what grief in others for the loss of them! If they so much labor after, and spend so many tears for the things of this present life, how am I to be bemoaned, pitied, and prayed for! My soul is dying, my soul is damning. Were my soul but in a good condition, and were I but sure of it, ah! how rich should I esteem myself, though blessed with bread and water! I should count those but small afflictions, and

should bear them as little burthens. A wounded spirit who can bear?"

And though I was thus troubled, and tossed, and afflicted, with the sight and sense and terror of my own wickedness, yet I was afraid to let this sense and sight go quite off my mind; for I found that unless guilt of conscience was taken off the right way, that is, by the blood of Christ, a man grew rather worse for the loss of his trouble of mind, than better. Wherefore, if my guilt lay hard upon me, then I should cry that the blood of Christ might take it off; and if it was going off without it, (for the sense of sin would be sometimes as if it would die, and go quite away) then I would also strive to fetch it upon my heart again, by bringing the punishment for sin in hell-fire upon my spirit; and should cry, "Lord, let it not go off my heart, but the right way, but by the blood of Christ, and by the application of thy mercy, through him, to my soul"; for that Scripture lay much upon me, "Without shedding of blood is no remission."¹ And that which made me the more afraid of this was, because I had seen some, who, though when they were under wounds of conscience, then they would cry and pray; yet, seeking rather present ease from their trouble than pardon for their sin, cared not how they lost their guilt so they got it out of their mind; now, having got it off the wrong way, it was not sanctified unto them; but they grew harder and blinder and more wicked after their trouble. This made me afraid, and made me cry to God the more, that it might not be so with me.

And now was I sorry that God had made me a man, for I feared I was a reprobate. I counted man as unconverted, the most doleful of all creatures. Thus being afflicted and tossed about my sad condition, I counted myself alone, and above the most of men unblest.

Yea, I thought it impossible that ever I should attain to so much goodness of heart, as to thank God that he had made me a man. Man indeed is the most noble by creation of all creatures in the visible world; but by sin he had made himself the most ignoble. The beasts, birds, fishes, &c., I blessed their condition, for they had not a sinful nature, they were not obnoxious to the wrath of God; they were not to go to hell-fire after death. I could therefore have rejoiced, had my condition been as any of theirs.

In this condition I went a great while; but

¹ Hebrews IX, 22.

when the comforting time was come, I heard one preach a sermon upon those words in the Song, "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair."¹ But at that time he made these two words, "my love," his chief and subject matter; from which, after he had a little opened the text, he observed these several conclusions: "1. That the church, and so every saved soul, is Christ's love, when loveless. 2. Christ's love without a cause. 3. Christ's love when hated of the world. 4. Christ's love when under temptation, and under desertion. 5. Christ's love, from first to last."

But I got nothing by what he said at present; only when he came to the application of the fourth particular, this was the word he said: "If it be so, that the saved soul is Christ's love when under temptation and desertion; then, poor tempted soul, when thou art assaulted and afflicted with temptations, and the hidings of God's face, yet think on these two words, 'my love,' still."

So as I was a going home, these words came again into my thoughts; and I well remember, as they came in, I said thus in my heart, "What shall I get by thinking on these two words?" This thought had no sooner passed through my heart, but these words began thus to kindle in my spirit: "Thou art my love, thou art my love," twenty times to-

gether; and still as they ran thus in my mind, they waxed stronger and warmer, and began to make me look up. But being as yet between hope and fear, I still replied in my heart, "But is it true? but is it true?" At which, that sentence fell in upon me, "He wist not that it was true which was done by the angel."²

Then I began to give place to the word, which, with power, did over and over make this joyful sound within my soul, "Thou art my love, thou art my love, and nothing shall separate thee from my love." And with that Romans eight, thirty-nine, came into my mind. Now was my heart filled full of comfort and hope, and now I could believe that my sins should be forgiven me; yea, I was now so taken with the love and mercy of God, that I remember I could not tell how to contain till I got home. I thought I could have spoken of his love, and have told of his mercy to me, even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before me, had they been capable to have understood me; wherefore I said in my soul, with much gladness, "Well, I would I had a pen and ink here, I would write this down before I go any further, for surely I will not forget this forty years hence." But alas! within less than forty days I began to question all again; and by times, fell to my old courses again; which made me begin to question all still.

¹ Song of Solomon IV, 1.

² Acts XII, 9.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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The reign of Queen Anne (1702-14) coincides with the appearance of one of the most brilliant groups of writers which has ever graced English letters. In 1704 were published Swift's *Tale of a Tub* and *Battle of the Books*. From 1709 till 1712 Steele and Addison were delighting all England with the kindly wit of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. In 1709 young Mr. Pope won instant recognition by the poetry of his *Pastorals*, which were shortly followed by the *Essay on Criticism* (1711) and *The Rape of the Lock* (1712). Among the names of lesser note one should not forget John Gay, whose *Shepherd's Week* was published in 1714.

It was a period of great political unrest, in which each of the parties sought to win and hold public opinion by the aid of literature; so that much of the literary energies of the Tory Swift and the Whig Addison was diverted into partisan propaganda, until, with the death of Anne and the accession of the German prince George I, England entered on a long period of all but undisputed Whig ascendancy, during which the politicians no longer needed literary allies. During the reigns of George I (1714-27) and George II (1727-60), the court played a negligible part in literary history, except as the great minister, Sir Robert Walpole, served as target of much brilliant literary satire.

During the period of the Commonwealth, the people of England had been subjected to the austere régime of Puritan prohibitions. With the Restoration of 1660 came, as a natural reaction, a time when — at any rate in those fashionable circles which most influence literature — the life of England was marked by general profligacy and by a cynical disregard of moral principles. It was the task of the early decades of the eighteenth century to reestablish a reasonable balance in the moral life of the nation. The Queen Anne wits were neither Puritans nor libertines, but sober-minded and accomplished men of the world. To them both Puritan "enthusiasm" and the profligacy of the Restoration "fop" were equally offenses against good taste and good sense. It was the avowed purpose of Addison and Steele in *The Spectator* to make vice ridiculous, and to bring to the cause of decency and virtue the powerful allies of wit and good breeding.

Both in England and in France it was a time when reason, and its practical corollary good sense, were the final court of appeal in matters of belief and conduct, and of art and literature also. The philosophical rationalism of Descartes, the empiricism of Hobbes and Locke, the newly awakened interest in the natural sciences of which Sir Isaac Newton is a great exemplar, and in England the reaction against seventeenth-century preoccupation with questions of religion, all conspired to turn men's minds away from the mysteries of life and to focus their attention on the real and actual. And so the literature of eighteenth-century England is primarily concerned with the everyday facts and interests of well-ordered, civilized human life, as it transacts itself in London and in the quiet English countryside. It is much given to moralizing — too much so for our modern taste — but its morality is that of enlightened worldliness, with small admixture of mystic yearning. Until Wesley and his Methodists began (1740) their appeal to men's hearts, the Christian religion had become in eighteenth-century pulpits so coldly rational that the orthodox churchman is hardly distinguishable from the "free-thinking" Deist with his reasoned "religion of nature." The prevailing school of ethics was a calculating utilitarianism, such as that which expresses itself in Franklin's famous dictum that "honesty is the best policy." For the foreign-born and dull-witted Hanoverian kings, with their stupid profligacies, it was impossible to feel an intense personal loyalty. In religion, in ethics, and in politics, the deeper springs of life had gone dry. There remained life's many-colored surface; and on that the literature of the period turned its brilliant searchlight.

It is preëminently a social literature, whose school is the coffeehouse and tavern or the polite *salon*. Swift sends his Gulliver to strange lands of fancy only that we may thus see contemporary England from a new angle of vision. The supreme masterpiece of Pope's art lays its scene in a fashionable drawing-room. Thomson, to be sure, turns his back on the life of the city, but only that he may record with perfect fidelity to truth the varying phenomena of the shifting seasons.

This complete devotion to the real and actual, this preoccupation with the everyday life of normal men and women, closed the doors to romance and discouraged the more giddy flights of poetical imagination; but it gave us instead, by way of compensation, much shrewd wisdom, sound sense, and flashing wit. It made possible such a great biography as Boswell's completely realistic portrait of Johnson and his contemporaries; it encouraged the kindly human art of letter-writing and gave us such great collections of personal letters as those of Gray, Horace Walpole, and Cowper; it expressed itself in the charming familiar essays of Addison and Goldsmith; chief of all, it enabled the eighteenth century to discover for us the modern novel. Fictitious narratives in prose had, of course, been written long before the eighteenth century; but they had been deliberately romantic and far from everyday reality. The modern novel, even when its scene is far-away or

long-ago, gives us always, if its art be good, a compelling sense of actuality. Its persons live in a real world and behave as we think we should behave if put in their places. It was Defoe and Richardson who discovered this art, and Fielding who brought it in *Tom Jones* (1749) to a degree of perfection that has seldom since been equaled.

The temper of the eighteenth century was in a high degree critical; and this critical temper expressed itself in brilliant, witty satire, which ranges all the way from the fierce indignation of a Swift, and the keen rapier strokes of Pope and Sheridan, to the kindly, humorous satire of Addison and Goldsmith. Eighteenth-century literature is often serious, but it is seldom solemn. Its prevailing spirit is the spirit of comedy — of wit and humor and daring jest. The most brilliant jester in our literature is an eighteenth-century parson, Laurence Sterne.

These qualities which mark the eighteenth century were less favorable to poetry than to prose. For good sense is the foe of enthusiasm, and enthusiasm rather than the spirit of comedy leads to the higher realms of poetry. The great bulk of eighteenth-century poetry — Pope, Gay, Goldsmith, Cowper, and much of Burns — keeps near the earth, and deals frequently with materials which the nineteenth century would have thought better suited for prose. When the poets of this period leave the lower levels, they too often mark their more ambitious flights by a speciously elevated diction — unfamiliar polysyllables of Latin derivation, studied departure from the normal word-order, the grandiose paraphrasing of simple ideas which substitutes for so commonplace a word as "birds" such phrases as "plumy people" or "tuneful choir." From these mannerisms Pope, except in his translations of Homer, is for the most part free; but they seriously mar the poetry of Thomson, the Pindaric odes of Gray and Collins, and the verse of a great company of minor poets. They are particularly frequent in poems written in blank verse — a metrical form which from 1730 on shares with the heroic couplet of Pope in general use for longer poems — and clearly have their origin in a mistaken attempt to imitate the poetical manner of Milton. Another vice of eighteenth-century poetry, the extravagant use of personified abstractions such as "pale Envy" and "wan Despair," springs from the influence of Milton's minor poems and from that of Spenser, who shared with Milton the literary devotion of poets and critics who preferred not to follow in the steps of Dryden and Pope.

Pope lived till 1744; and the prestige of his genius, and that of his master Dryden, dominates the first half of the century. To the body of critical principles which underlie Pope's poetry, the principles that are formulated in his *Essay on Criticism* and in the *Art Poétique* of the French poet-critic Boileau, literary historians have given the name "neo-classicism." Like all such labels, the term "neo-classical" is not easy to define, for within the school are included several varying sects; but the chief qualities implied by it are good sense, reasonableness, scrupulous fidelity to the truth of ascertained fact and to the normal and constant sentiments of human nature, adherence to the form and spirit of the great writers of classical antiquity who seemed most completely to exemplify the principles of reasonableness and truth to nature. Neo-classicism is the foe of obscurity and bombast, of the far-fetched "conceits" of the seventeenth-century "metaphysical" poets such as Donne and Herbert, of all that is improbable, abnormal, not immediately recognizable by the average intelligent man as part of the universal experience of human nature. In particular, it had nothing but scorn for the extravagant adventures of medieval romance. In so far as this school of criticism has made for sanity and clarity, its influence on literature has been a wholesome one; but its principles, when narrowly applied, unduly restrict the field of poetry. For the human spirit must be free to range beyond the region of established fact, to concern itself with realities which transcend everyday experience, to explore even such a world of dream as that in which Kubla Khan decreed his stately pleasure-dome.

In the second half of the eighteenth century this neo-classic theory of literature, though still, under the sturdy championship of Samuel Johnson, the dominant one, was increasingly subject to dissent and open attack. If Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* (1751) conforms in the main to its principles, his *Bard* (1757) is in a totally foreign spirit, and his latest poems revert to the mystical stories of the pagan North. Cowper mingles with his neo-classical fidelity to fact a tender but intense religious fervor. The cult of "sensibility," or sentimentality, as exemplified by Sterne substitutes for sound reason the caprice of random feeling. Macpherson's "Ossian" (1761) glorifies the virtues of primitive Caledonian chieftains. Bishop Percy revived the popular ballads (1765). Horace Walpole in his *Castle of Otranto* (1764) brings back the supernatural horrors of medieval romance. The disciples of Rousseau preach a "return to nature" which means profound distrust of all the conventions of civilized society, and the exaltation of the simple rustic and the "noble savage." When in 1786 Burns published his Kilmarnock volume of poems, written on rural themes and in a rustic dialect, he was hailed as the "plowman poet," the "child of nature," who owed nothing to Aristotle and the schools. Though Burns is for the most part realistic rather than romantic, though he owes much to the tradition of eighteenth-century poetry, he is none the less a very different sort of poet from the polished, courtly Pope. In his verses we hear also the echoes of the French Revolution, which was ushering in a new period of European history, and with it a new set of literary ideals.

For the history of the period the standard work is W. E. H. Lecky's *History of England in the*

Eighteenth Century in seven volumes. A briefer account may be found in pp. 701-806 of J. R. Green's *Short History of the English People*. Another standard work is Sir Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*. For the literary history of the century, see Volumes IX and X of the *Cambridge History of English Literature*. G. Saintsbury's *Peace of the Augustans* is "a survey of eighteenth-century literature as a place of rest and refreshment." Thackeray's *English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century* is stimulating and delightful, but not always trustworthy. An excellent account of manners and customs may be found in Sir Walter Besant's *London in the Eighteenth Century*. Austin Dobson's *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, in three small volumes, leads one into amusing out-of-the-way corners.

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745)

Swift lies buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, "where fierce indignation cannot further lacerate his heart." These words, translated from the Latin epitaph which he himself composed, are the key to his character and to his writings. So relentlessly does this "sæva indignatio" tear his heart, that to a careless observer he seems heartless. Nothing could seem more heartless than his *Modest Proposal* (1729) — that the poverty-stricken children of Ireland should be sold for butcher's meat to the landlords. Yet in every line of it is throbbing an intense and passionate indignation at the social and economic evils of eighteenth-century Ireland. The proposal is no more shocking than the condition which calls it forth.

Swift's life was a mixture of galling disappointments and hollow triumphs. He was born in 1667 in Ireland, though of English ancestry, and was educated, with the financial help of a rich uncle, at Trinity College, Dublin. At the age of twenty-two he entered the household of Sir William Temple, statesman and author, at Moor Park near London, to whom he became private secretary, where with several interruptions he continued for ten years till Sir William's death. He was now thirty-two, with no prospect of success. While still in Temple's employ, he was ordained priest in the Church of England.

In 1704, he published anonymously the *Tale of a Tub*, a very vigorous and brilliant, but irreverent and often coarse satire on the divisions of the Christian Church — Roman, Anglican, Presbyterian. This satire, which goes far beyond its immediate subject and includes a scathing analysis of many aspects of human life, is in some ways the most masterly expression of Swift's great powers. In the same year was published the *Battle of the Books*, a brilliant satire on literary controversy. In 1708 was published the *Argument against Abolishing Christianity*, a masterpiece of comic irony.

At last, during the Tory ministry of 1710-14, Swift had his day of triumph, when his enormous powers of intellect had a chance to make themselves felt. It was essential to the Government that it should win and hold public opinion. Swift's vitriolic pen became its chief support. It is no exaggeration to say that he kept the Tory ministry in office. Cabinet ministers sought not only his aid as pamphleteer but his shrewd advice. He was actually the most powerful man in England. He writes exultantly, but scornfully, of it all in the *Journal to Stella*, a diary addressed to his dearest friend, Miss Esther Johnson. Swift's devotion to "Stella" is a fascinating but baffling romance. There is some reason to believe that he was secretly married to her; but no marriage was ever acknowledged; and the friendship, which began when Stella was a little girl and continued till her death in 1728, was free from any breath of scandal.

Swift had struggled through poverty and bad health to gain power. By the time he had achieved it, he had developed such a contempt for humanity and all its pettiness that he despised the plaudits of his Lilliputian countrymen. For his services to the Government he expected to be rewarded by appointment to a bishopric; but instead he was given only the deanship of St. Patrick's, Dublin. Thither he went on the death of Queen Anne in 1714, and lived there the rest of his life, with only occasional visits to England. This life seemed to him little better than exile; he was a bitter, disappointed man. But he none the less identified himself with the interests of Ireland. In the *Drapier's Letters* (1724) he vigorously espoused the cause of Ireland against English injustice and oppression. He became the most popular figure in Dublin and in all Ireland; but he scorned this popularity even more than he had the deference paid to him during the period of his political power in London.

In 1726, appeared the *Travels of Lemuel Gulliver*, his most famous work, written, he tells us, "to vex the world rather than divert it." It is a satire on government and society, and on the fundamental and universal qualities of human nature. In Lilliput we see through the eyes of Gulliver the essential pettiness of our life. The account of this land of pygmies, where all nature is reduced to a scale of inches for feet, is elaborated with such delightful wit and fancy that one is in danger of forgetting the bitter satire, the pessimism and misanthropy, which underlie it — qualities which come out with increasing clearness in the three remaining voyages, of which the last has been called "a libel on human nature." The attitude of the Lilliputians towards Gulliver — first fear, then

admiration, and at last ingratitude and enmity veiled under the pretense of legal procedure — is the type of the reception which a great man may expect from ordinary humanity.

After Stella's death in 1728, Swift's gloom and bitterness increased. The last years of his life were made more terrible by mental disease. His mind was clouded, his speech nearly gone; he lived in a dreadful apathy. He died in 1745, leaving his property of some ten thousand pounds to found a hospital in Dublin for lunatics and incurables.

Swift is one of the world's greatest satirists; he is also one of the greatest masters of English prose. The standard edition of his works is that of Temple Scott in the Bohn Library. The best biography is that of Craik.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

1726

Gulliver's Travels purports to be the adventures, related by the traveler himself, of one Captain Lemuel Gulliver, whose portrait was prefixed to the first edition. Swift's name did not appear, though his authorship was not long a secret. The book was an immediate and great success, and has ever since been one of the great classics of English prose. In it Swift is making fun of the many books of travel, spiced with marvelous adventure, which were popular in his day. But the satire goes much deeper than that; everywhere Swift exposes by subtle irony and delicate insinuation the vices and follies of our own human society. Lilliput stands for England, and the neighboring kingdom of Blefuscu for France; Whigs and Tories have their counterpart in the Lilliputian parties of low-heels and high; religious dissension and bitter persecution appear in the dispute as to the proper end at which one should break one's breakfast egg. If pride of place and petty jealousy are ridiculous in Lilliput, are they less ridiculous in us merely because we and our world happen to be constructed on a somewhat larger scale of bigness? On his second voyage, Gulliver visits a land of giants, who listen with contemptuous scorn to his glowing account of European civilization, and conclude that our humanity is "the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

PART I

A VOYAGE TO LILLIPUT

CHAPTER I

The Author gives some account of himself and family, his first inducements to travel. He is shipwrecked, and swims for his life, gets safe on shore in the country of Lilliput, is made a prisoner, and is carried up country.

My father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire; I was the third of five sons. He sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge, at fourteen years old, where I resided three years, and applied myself close to my studies; but the charge of maintaining me (although

I had a very scanty allowance) being too great for a narrow fortune, I was bound apprentice to Mr. James Bates, an eminent surgeon in London, with whom I continued four years; and my father now and then sending me small sums of money, I laid them out in learning navigation, and other parts of the mathematics, useful to those who intend to travel, as I always believed it would be some time or other my fortune to do. When I left Mr. Bates, I went down to my father; where, by the assistance of him and my uncle John, and some other relations, I got forty pounds, and a promise of thirty pounds a year to maintain me at Leyden; there I studied physic two years and seven months, knowing it would be useful in long voyages.

Soon after my return from Leyden, I was recommended by my good master, Mr. Bates, to be surgeon to the *Swallow*, Captain Abraham Pannell, commander; with whom I continued three years and a half, making a voyage or two into the Levant, and some other parts. When I came back I resolved to settle in London, to which Mr. Bates, my master, encouraged me, and by him I was recommended to several patients. I took part of a small house in the Old Jury; and being advised to alter my condition, I married Mrs. Mary Burton, second daughter to Mr. Edmund Burton, hosier, in Newgate-street, with whom I received four hundred pounds for a portion.

But, my good master Bates dying in two years after, and I having few friends, my business began to fail; for my conscience would not suffer me to imitate the bad practice of too many among my brethren. Having therefore consulted with my wife, and some of my acquaintance, I determined to go again to sea. I was surgeon successively in two ships, and made several voyages, for six years, to the East and West-Indies, by which I got some addition to my fortune. My hours of leisure I spent in reading the best authors, ancient and modern, being always provided with a good number of books; and when I was ashore, in observing the manners and dispositions of the people, as well as learning

their language, wherein I had a great facility by the strength of my memory.

The last of these voyages not proving very fortunate, I grew weary of the sea, and intended to stay at home with my wife and family. I removed from the Old Jury to Fetter-Lane, and from thence to Wapping, hoping to get business among the sailors; but it would not turn to account. After three years expectation that things would mend, I accepted an advantageous offer from Captain William Prichard, master of the *Antelope*, who was making a voyage to the South-Sea. We set sail from Bristol, May 4, 1699, and our voyage at first was very prosperous.

It would not be proper, for some reasons, to trouble the reader with the particulars of our adventures in those seas: let it suffice to inform him, that in our passage from thence to the East-Indies, we were driven by a violent storm to the north-west of Van Diemen's Land. By an observation, we found ourselves in the latitude of 30 degrees 2 minutes south. Twelve of our crew were dead by immoderate labor, and ill food; the rest were in a very weak condition. On the fifth of November, which was the beginning of summer in those parts, the weather being very hazy, the seamen spied a rock, within half a cable's length of the ship; but the wind was so strong, that we were driven directly upon it, and immediately split. Six of the crew, of whom I was one, having let down the boat into the sea, made a shift to get clear of the ship, and the rock. We rowed, by my computation, about three leagues, till we were able to work no longer, being already spent with labor while we were in the ship. We therefore trusted ourselves to the mercy of the waves, and in about half an hour the boat was overset by a sudden flurry from the north. What became of my companions in the boat, as well as of those who escaped on the rock, or were left in the vessel, I cannot tell; but conclude they were all lost. For my own part, I swam as fortune directed me, and was pushed forward by wind and tide. I often let my legs drop, and could feel no bottom: but when I was almost gone, and able to struggle no longer, I found myself within my depth; and by this time the storm was much abated. The declivity was so small, that I walked near a mile before I got to the shore, which I conjectured was about eight a clock in the evening. I then advanced forward near half a mile, but could not discover any sign of houses or inhabitants; at least I was in so weak a condition,

that I did not observe them. I was extremely tired, and with that, and the heat of the weather, and about half a pint of brandy that I drank as I left the ship, I found myself much inclined to sleep. I lay down on the grass, which was very short and soft, where I slept sounder than ever I remember to have done in my life, and, as I reckoned, about nine hours; for when I awaked, it was just daylight. I attempted to rise, but was not able to stir: for as I happened to lie on my back, I found my arms and legs were strongly fastened on each side to the ground; and my hair, which was long and thick, tied down in the same manner. I likewise felt several slender ligatures across my body, from my arm-pits to my thighs. I could only look upwards, the sun began to grow hot, and the light offended my eyes. I heard a confused noise about me, but in the posture I lay, could see nothing except the sky. In a little time I felt something alive moving on my left leg, which advancing gently forward over my breast, came almost up to my chin; when bending my eyes downwards as much as I could, I perceived it to be a human creature not six inches high, with a bow and arrow in his hands, and a quiver at his back. In the mean time, I felt at least forty more of the same kind (as I conjectured) following the first. I was in the utmost astonishment, and roared so loud, that they all ran back in a fright; and some of them, as I was afterwards told, were hurt with the falls they got by leaping from my sides upon the ground. However, they soon returned, and one of them, who ventured so far as to get a full sight of my face, lifting up his hands and eyes by way of admiration, cried out in a shrill, but distinct voice, *Hekinah degul*: the others repeated the same words several times, but then I knew not what they meant. I lay all this while, as the reader may believe, in great uneasiness: at length, struggling to get loose, I had the fortune to break the strings, and wrench out the pegs that fastened my left arm to the ground: for, by lifting it up to my face, I discovered the methods they had taken to bind me, and at the same time with a violent pull, which gave me excessive pain, I a little loosened the strings that tied down my hair on the left side, so that I was just able to turn my head about two inches. But the creatures ran off a second time, before I could seize them; whereupon there was a great shout in a very shrill accent, and after it ceased, I heard one of them cry aloud *Tolgo phonac*; when in an instant I felt above an

hundred arrows discharged on my left hand, which pricked me like so many needles; and besides, they shot another flight into the air, as we do bombs in Europe, whereof many, I suppose, fell on my body, (though I felt them not) and some on my face, which I immediately covered with my left hand. When this shower of arrows was over, I fell a groaning with grief and pain, and then striving again to get loose, they discharged another volley larger than the first, and some of them attempted with spears to stick me in the sides; but, by good luck, I had on a buff jerkin, which they could not pierce. I thought it the most prudent method to lie still, and my design was to continue so till night, when, my left hand being already loose, I could easily free myself: and as for the inhabitants, I had reason to believe I might be a match for the greatest armies they could bring against me, if they were all of the same size with him that I saw. But fortune disposed otherwise of me. When the people observed I was quiet, they discharged no more arrows; but, by the noise I heard, I knew their numbers increased; and about four yards from me, over-against my right ear, I heard a knocking for above an hour, like that of people at work; when turning my head that way, as well as the pegs and strings would permit me, I saw a stage erected, about a foot and a half from the ground, capable of holding four of the inhabitants, with two or three ladders to mount it: from whence one of them, who seemed to be a person of quality, made me a long speech, whereof I understood not one syllable. But I should have mentioned, that before the principal person began his oration, he cried out three times, *Langro dehul san*: (these words and the former were afterwards repeated and explained to me). Whereupon immediately about fifty of the inhabitants came and cut the strings that fastened the left side of my head, which gave me the liberty of turning it to the right, and of observing the person and gesture of him that was to speak. He appeared to be of a middle age, and taller than any of the other three who attended him, whereof one was a page that held up his train, and seemed to be somewhat longer than my middle finger; the other two stood one on each side to support him. He acted every part of an orator, and I could observe many periods of threatenings, and others of promises, pity, and kindness. I answered in a few words, but in the most submissive manner, lifting up my left hand, and both my eyes to the sun, as calling him for a witness;

and being almost famished with hunger, having not eaten a morsel for some hours before I left the ship, I found the demands of nature so strong upon me, that I could not forbear showing my impatience (perhaps against the strict rules of decency) by putting my finger frequently on my mouth, to signify that I wanted food. The *Hurgo* (for so they call a great lord, as I afterwards learnt) understood me very well. He descended from the stage, and commanded that several ladders should be applied to my sides, on which above an hundred of the inhabitants mounted and walked towards my mouth, laden with baskets full of meat, which had been provided and sent thither by the King's orders, upon the first intelligence he received of me. I observed there was the flesh of several animals, but could not distinguish them by the taste. There were shoulders, legs, and loins, shaped like those of mutton, and very well dressed, but smaller than the wings of a lark. I eat them by two or three at a mouthful, and took three loaves at a time, about the bigness of musket bullets. They supplied me as fast as they could, showing a thousand marks of wonder and astonishment at my bulk and appetite. I then made another sign that I wanted drink. They found by my eating, that a small quantity would not suffice me; and being a most ingenious people, they slung up with great dexterity one of their largest hogsheads, then rolled it towards my hand, and beat out the top; I drank it off at a draught, which I might well do, for it did not hold half a pint, and tasted like a small wine of Burgundy, but much more delicious. They brought me a second hogshead, which I drank in the same manner, and made signs for more, but they had none to give me. When I had performed these wonders, they shouted for joy, and danced upon my breast, repeating several times as they did at first, *Hekinah degul*. They made me a sign that I should throw down the two hogsheads, but first warning the people below to stand out of the way, crying aloud, *Borach mivola*, and when they saw the vessels in the air, there was an universal shout of *Hekinah degul*. I confess I was often tempted while they were passing backwards and forwards on my body, to seize forty or fifty of the first that came in my reach, and dash them against the ground. But the remembrance of what I had felt, which probably might not be the worst they could do, and the promise of honor I made them, for so I interpreted my submissive behavior, soon drove out these imaginations.

Besides, I now considered myself as bound by the laws of hospitality to a people who had treated me with so much expense and magnificence. However, in my thoughts, I could not sufficiently wonder at the intrepidity of these diminutive mortals, who durst venture to mount and walk upon my body, while one of my hands was at liberty, without trembling at the very sight of so prodigious a creature as I must appear to them. After some time, when they observed that I made no more demands for meat, there appeared before me a person of high rank from his Imperial Majesty. His Excellency, having mounted on the small of my right leg, advanced forwards up to my face, with about a dozen of his retinue. And producing his credentials under the Signet Royal, which he applied close to my eyes, spoke about ten minutes, without any signs of anger, but with a kind of determinate resolution; often pointing forwards, which, as I afterwards found, was towards the capital city, about half a mile distant, whither it was agreed by his Majesty in council that I must be conveyed. I answered in few words, but to no purpose, and made a sign with my hand that was loose, putting it to the other (but over his Excellency's head for fear of hurting him or his train) and then to my own head and body, to signify that I desired my liberty. It appeared that he understood me well enough, for he shook his head by way of disapprobation, and held his hand in a posture to show that I must be carried as a prisoner. However, he made other signs to let me understand that I should have meat and drink enough, and very good treatment. Whereupon I once more thought of attempting to break my bonds; but again, when I felt the smart of their arrows, upon my face and hands, which were all in blisters, and many of the darts still sticking in them, and observing likewise that the number of my enemies increased, I gave tokens to let them know that they might do with me what they pleased. Upon this, the *Hurgo* and his train withdrew, with much civility and cheerful countenances. Soon after I heard a general shout, with frequent repetitions of the words, *Peplom selan*, and I felt great numbers of people on my left side relaxing the cords to such a degree, that I was able to turn upon my right, and to ease myself with making water; which I very plentifully did, to the great astonishment of the people, who conjecturing by my motions what I was going to do, immediately opened to the right and left on that side to avoid the

torrent which fell with such noise and violence from me. But before this, they had daubed my face and both my hands with a sort of ointment very pleasant to the smell, which in a few minutes removed all the smart of their arrows. These circumstances, added to the refreshment I had received by their victuals and drink, which were very nourishing, disposed me to sleep. I slept about eight hours, as I was afterwards assured; and it was no wonder, for the physicians, by the Emperor's order, had mingled a sleepy potion in the hogshhead of wine.

It seems that upon the first moment I was discovered sleeping on the ground after my landing, the Emperor had early notice of it by an express; and determined in council that I should be tied in the manner I have related, (which was done in the night while I slept) that plenty of meat and drink should be sent to me, and a machine prepared to carry me to the capital city.

This resolution perhaps may appear very bold and dangerous, and I am confident would not be imitated by any prince in Europe on the like occasion; however, in my opinion, it was extremely prudent, as well as generous: for supposing these people had endeavored to kill me with their spears and arrows while I was asleep, I should certainly have awaked with the first sense of smart, which might so far have roused my rage and strength, as to have enabled me to break the strings wherewith I was tied; after which, as they were not able to make resistance, so they could expect no mercy.

These people are most excellent mathematicians, and arrived to a great perfection in mechanics, by the countenance and encouragement of the Emperor, who is a renowned patron of learning. This prince hath several machines fixed on wheels, for the carriage of trees and other great weights. He often builds his largest men of war, whereof some are nine foot long, in the woods where the timber grows, and has them carried on these engines three or four hundred yards to the sea. Five hundred carpenters and engineers were immediately set at work to prepare the greatest engine they had. It was a frame of wood raised three inches from the ground, about seven foot long and four wide, moving upon twenty-two wheels. The shout I heard was upon the arrival of this engine, which it seems set out in four hours after my landing. It was brought parallel to me as I lay. But the principal difficulty was to raise and place me in this vehicle. Eighty poles, each of one

foot high, were erected for this purpose, and very strong cords of the bigness of packthread were fastened by hooks to many bandages, which the workmen had girt round my neck, my hands, my body, and my legs. Nine hundred of the strongest men were employed to draw up these cords by many pulleys fastened on the poles, and thus, in less than three hours, I was raised and slung into the engine, and there tied fast. All this I was told, for, while the whole operation was performing, I lay in a profound sleep, by the force of that soporiferous medicine infused into my liquor. Fifteen hundred of the Emperor's largest horses, each about four inches and a half high, were employed to draw me towards the metropolis, which, as I said, was half a mile distant.

About four hours after we began our journey, I awaked by a very ridiculous accident; for the carriage being stopped a while to adjust something that was out of order, two or three of the young natives had the curiosity to see how I looked when I was asleep; they climbed up into the engine, and advancing very softly to my face, one of them, an officer in the guards, put the sharp end of his half-pike a good way up into my left nostril, which tickled my nose like a straw, and made me sneeze violently: whereupon they stole off unperceived, and it was three weeks before I knew the cause of my awaking so suddenly. We made a long march the remaining part of that day, and rested at night with five hundred guards on each side of me, half with torches, and half with bows and arrows, ready to shoot me if I should offer to stir. The next morning at sun-rise we continued our march, and arrived within two hundred yards of the city gates about noon. The Emperor, and all his court, came out to meet us; but his great officers would by no means suffer his Majesty to endanger his person by mounting on my body.

At the place where the carriage stopped, there stood an ancient temple, esteemed to be the largest in the whole kingdom; which having been polluted some years before by an unnatural murder, was, according to the zeal of those people, looked upon as profane, and therefore had been applied to common uses, and all the ornaments and furniture carried away. In this edifice it was determined I should lodge. The great gate fronting to the north was about four foot high, and almost two foot wide, through which I could easily creep. On each side of the gate was a small window not above six inches from the ground:

into that on the left side, the King's smiths conveyed fourscore and eleven chains, like those that hang to a lady's watch in Europe, and almost as large, which were locked to my left leg with six and thirty padlocks. Over-against this temple, on the other side of the great highway, at twenty foot distance, there was a turret at least five foot high. Here the Emperor ascended, with many principal lords of his court, to have an opportunity of viewing me, as I was told, for I could not see them. It was reckoned that above an hundred thousand inhabitants came out of the town upon the same errand; and, in spite of my guards, I believe there could not be fewer than ten thousand at several times, who mounted my body by the help of ladders. But a proclamation was soon issued to forbid it upon pain of death. When the workmen found it was impossible for me to break loose, they cut all the strings that bound me; whereupon I rose up, with as melancholy a disposition as ever I had in my life. But the noise and astonishment of the people at seeing me rise and walk, are not to be expressed. The chains that held my left leg were about two yards long, and gave me not only the liberty of walking backwards and forwards in a semicircle; but, being fixed within four inches of the gate, allowed me to creep in, and lie at my full length in the temple.

CHAPTER II

The Emperor of Lilliput, attended by several of the nobility, comes to see the Author in his confinement. The Emperor's person and habit described. Learned men appointed to teach the Author their language. He gains favor by his mild disposition. His pockets are searched, and his sword and pistols taken from him.

When I found myself on my feet, I looked about me, and must confess I never beheld a more entertaining prospect. The country round appeared like a continued garden, and the inclosed fields, which were generally forty foot square, resembled so many beds of flowers. These fields were intermingled with woods of half a stang,¹ and the tallest trees, as I could judge, appeared to be seven foot high. I viewed the town on my left hand, which looked like the painted scene of a city in a theatre.

I had been for some hours extremely pressed by the necessities of nature; which was no wonder, it being almost two days since I had last disburthened myself. I was under

¹ A stang is a pole or perch; sixteen feet and a half.

great difficulties between urgency and shame. The best expedient I could think on, was to creep into my house, which I accordingly did; and shutting the gate after me, I went as far as the length of my chain would suffer, and discharged my body of that uneasy load. But this was the only time I was ever guilty of so uncleanly an action; for which I cannot but hope the candid reader will give some allowance, after he hath maturely and impartially considered my case, and the distress I was in. From this time my constant practice was, as soon as I rose, to perform that business in open air, at the full extent of my chain, and due care was taken every morning before company came, that the offensive matter should be carried off in wheel-barrows, by two servants appointed for that purpose. I would not have dwelt so long upon a circumstance, that perhaps at first sight may appear not very momentous, if I had not thought it necessary to justify my character in point of cleanliness to the world; which I am told some of my maligners have been pleased, upon this and other occasions, to call in question.

When this adventure was at an end, I came back out of my house, having occasion for fresh air. The Emperor was already descended from the tower, and advancing on horseback towards me, which had like to have cost him dear; for the beast, though very well trained, yet wholly unused to such a sight, which appeared as if a mountain moved before him, reared up on his hinder feet: but that prince, who is an excellent horseman, kept his seat, till his attendants ran in, and held the bridle, while his Majesty had time to dismount. When he alighted, he surveyed me round with great admiration,¹ but kept beyond the length of my chain. He ordered his cooks and butlers, who were already prepared, to give me victuals and drink, which they pushed forward in a sort of vehicles upon wheels, till I could reach them. I took these vehicles, and soon emptied them all; twenty of them were filled with meat, and ten with liquor; each of the former afforded me two or three good mouthfuls, and I emptied the liquor of ten vessels, which was contained in earthen vials, into one vehicle, drinking it off at a draught; and so I did with the rest. The Empress, and young Princes of the blood of both sexes, attended by many ladies, sat at some distance in their chairs; but upon the accident that happened to the Emperor's horse, they alighted, and came

I wonder.

near his person, which I am now going to describe. He is taller by almost the breadth of my nail, than any of his court; which alone is enough to strike an awe into the beholders. His features are strong and masculine, with an Austrian lip and arched nose, his complexion olive, his countenance erect, his body and limbs well proportioned, all his motions graceful, and his deportment majestic. He was then past his prime, being twenty-eight years and three quarters old, of which he had reigned about seven, in great felicity, and generally victorious. For the better convenience of beholding him, I lay on my side, so that my face was parallel to his, and he stood but three yards off: however, I have had him since many times in my hand, and therefore cannot be deceived in the description. His dress was very plain and simple, and the fashion of it between the Asiatic and the European: but he had on his head a light helmet of gold, adorned with jewels, and a plume on the crest. He held his sword drawn in his hand, to defend himself, if I should happen to break loose; it was almost three inches long, the hilt and scabbard were gold enriched with diamonds. His voice was shrill, but very clear and articulate, and I could distinctly hear it when I stood up. The ladies and courtiers were all most magnificently clad, so that the spot they stood upon seemed to resemble a petticoat spread on the ground, embroidered with figures of gold and silver. His Imperial Majesty spoke often to me, and I returned answers, but neither of us could understand a syllable. There were several of his priests and lawyers present (as I conjectured by their habits) who were commanded to address themselves to me, and I spoke to them in as many languages as I had the least smattering of, which were High and Low Dutch, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, and Lingua Franca; but all to no purpose. After about two hours the court retired, and I was left with a strong guard, to prevent the impertinence, and probably the malice of the rabble, who were very impatient to crowd about me as near as they durst, and some of them had the impudence to shoot their arrows at me as I sat on the ground by the door of my house, whereof one very narrowly missed my left eye. But the colonel ordered six of the ringleaders to be seized, and thought no punishment so proper as to deliver them bound into my hands, which some of his soldiers accordingly did, pushing them forwards with the butt-ends of their pikes into my reach; I took them

all in my right hand, put five of them into my coat-pocket, and as to the sixth, I made a countenance as if I would eat him alive. The poor man squalled terribly, and the colonel and his officers were in much pain, especially when they saw me take out my pen-knife: but I soon put them out of fear: for, looking mildly, and immediately cutting the strings he was bound with, I set him gently on the ground, and away he ran. I treated the rest in the same manner, taking them one by one out of my pocket, and I observed both the soldiers and people were highly obliged at this mark of my clemency, which was represented very much to my advantage at court.

Towards night I got with some difficulty into my house, where I lay on the ground, and continued to do so about a fortnight; during which time the Emperor gave orders to have a bed prepared for me. Six hundred beds of the common measure were brought in carriages, and worked up in my house; an hundred and fifty of their beds sewn together made up the breadth and length, and these were four double, which however kept me but very indifferently from the hardness of the floor, that was of smooth stone. By the same computation they provided me with sheets, blankets, and coverlets, tolerable enough for one who had been so long inured to hardships as I.

As the news of my arrival spread through the kingdom, it brought prodigious numbers of rich, idle, and curious people to see me; so that the villages were almost emptied, and great neglect of tillage and household affairs must have ensued, if his Imperial Majesty had not provided, by several proclamations and orders of state, against this inconvenience. He directed that those who had already beheld me should return home, and not presume to come within fifty yards of my house without licence from court; whereby the secretaries of state got considerable fees.

In the mean time, the Emperor held frequent councils to debate what course should be taken with me; and I was afterwards assured by a particular friend, a person of great quality, who was looked upon to be as much in the secret as any, that the court was under many difficulties concerning me. They apprehended my breaking loose, that my diet would be very expensive, and might cause a famine. Sometimes they determined to starve me, or at least to shoot me in the face and hands with poisoned arrows, which would soon dispatch me; but again they considered,

that the stench of so large a carcass might produce a plague in the metropolis, and probably spread through the whole kingdom. In the midst of these consultations, several officers of the army went to the door of the great council-chamber; and two of them being admitted, gave an account of my behavior to the six criminals above-mentioned, which made so favorable an impression in the breast of his Majesty and the whole board, in my behalf, that an Imperial Commission was issued out, obliging all the villages nine hundred yards around the city, to deliver in every morning six beeves, forty sheep, and other victuals for my sustenance; together with a proportionable quantity of bread, and wine, and other liquors; for the due payment of which his Majesty gave assignments upon his treasury. For this prince lives chiefly upon his own demesnes, seldom, except upon great occasions, raising any subsidies upon his subjects, who are bound to attend him in his wars at their own expense. An establishment was also made of six hundred persons to be my domestics, who had board-wages allowed for their maintenance, and tents built for them very conveniently on each side of my door. It was likewise ordered, that three hundred tailors should make me a suit of clothes after the fashion of the country: that six of his Majesty's greatest scholars should be employed to instruct me in their language; and, lastly, that the Emperor's horses, and those of the nobility, and troops of guards, should be frequently exercised in my sight, to accustom themselves to me. All these orders were duly put in execution, and in about three weeks I made a great progress in learning their language; during which time, the Emperor frequently honored me with his visits, and was pleased to assist my masters in teaching me. We began already to converse together in some sort; and the first words I learnt were to express my desire that he would please to give me my liberty, which I every day repeated on my knees. His answer, as I could comprehend it, was, that this must be a work of time, not to be thought on without the advice of his council, and that first I must *Lumos kelmin pesso desmar lon emposo*; that is, swear a peace with him and his kingdom. However, that I should be used with all kindness; and he advised me to acquire, by my patience and discreet behavior, the good opinion of himself and his subjects. He desired I would not take it ill, if he gave orders to certain proper officers to search me; for

probably I might carry about me several weapons, which must needs be dangerous things, if they answered the bulk of so prodigious a person. I said, his Majesty should be satisfied, for I was ready to strip myself, and turn up my pockets before him. This I delivered part in words, and part in signs. He replied, that by the laws of the kingdom I must be searched by two of his officers; that he knew this could not be done without my consent and assistance; that he had so good an opinion of my generosity and justice, as to trust their persons in my hands: that whatever they took from me should be returned when I left the country, or paid for at the rate which I would set upon them. I took up the two officers in my hands, put them first into my coat-pockets, and then into every other pocket about me, except my two fobs, and another secret pocket which I had no mind should be searched, wherein I had some little necessaries that were of no consequence to any but myself. In one of my fobs there was a silver watch, and in the other a small quantity of gold in a purse. These gentlemen, having pen, ink, and paper about them, made an exact inventory of every thing they saw; and when they had done, desired I would set them down, that they might deliver it to the Emperor. This inventory I afterwards translated into English, and is word for word as follows:

Imprimis, In the right coat-pocket of the Great Man-Mountain (for so I interpret the words *Quinbus Flestrin*) after the strictest search, we found only one great piece of coarse cloth, large enough to be a foot-cloth for your Majesty's chief room of state. In the left pocket we saw a huge silver chest, with a cover of the same metal, which we, the searchers, were not able to lift. We desired it should be opened, and one of us stepping into it, found himself up to the mid leg in a sort of dust, some part whereof flying up to our faces, set us both a sneezing for several times together. In his right waistcoat-pocket we found a prodigious bundle of white thin substances, folded one over another, about the bigness of three men, tied with a strong cable, and marked with black figures; which we humbly conceive to be writings, every letter almost half as large as the palm of our hands. In the left there was a sort of engine, from the back of which were extended twenty long poles, resembling the palisadoes before your Majesty's court; wherewith we conjecture the Man-Mountain combs his

head; for we did not always trouble him with questions, because we found it a great difficulty to make him understand us. In the large pocket on the right side of his middle cover (so I translate the word *ranfu-lo*, by which they meant my breeches) we saw a hollow pillar of iron, about the length of a man, fastened to a strong piece of timber, larger than the pillar; and upon one side of the pillar were huge pieces of iron sticking out, cut into strange figures, which we know not what to make of. In the left pocket, another engine of the same kind. In the smaller pocket on the right side, were several round flat pieces of white and red metal, of different bulk; some of the white, which seemed to be silver, were so large and heavy, that my comrade and I could hardly lift them. In the left pocket were two black pillars irregularly shaped: we could not, without difficulty, reach the top of them as we stood at the bottom of his pocket. One of them was covered, and seemed all of a piece: but at the upper end of the other, there appeared a white round substance, about twice the bigness of our heads. Within each of these was enclosed a prodigious plate of steel; which, by our orders, we obliged him to show us, because we apprehended they might be dangerous engines. He took them out of their cases, and told us, that in his own country his practice was to shave his beard with one of these, and cut his meat with the other. There were two pockets which we could not enter: these he called his fobs; they were two large slits cut into the top of his middle cover, but squeezed close by the pressure of his belly. Out of the right fob hung a great silver chain, with a wonderful kind of engine at the bottom. We directed him to draw out whatever was fastened to that chain; which appeared to be a globe, half silver, and half of some transparent metal; for, on the transparent side, we saw certain strange figures circularly drawn, and thought we could touch them, till we found our fingers stopped by that lucid substance. He put this engine to our ears, which made an incessant noise like that of a water-mill. And we conjecture it is either some unknown animal, or the god that he worships; but we are more inclined to the latter opinion, because he assured us, (if we understood him right, for he expressed himself very imperfectly) that he seldom did any thing without consulting it. He called it his oracle, and said it pointed out the time for every action of his life. From the left fob he took out a net almost large enough for a

fisherman, but contrived to open and shut like a purse, and served him for the same use: we found therein several massy pieces of yellow metal, which, if they be real gold, must be of immense value.

Having thus, in obedience to your Majesty's commands, diligently searched all his pockets, we observed a girdle about his waist made of the hide of some prodigious animal; from which, on the left side, hung a sword of the length of five men; and on the right, a bag or pouch divided into two cells, each cell capable of holding three of your Majesty's subjects. In one of these cells were several globes or balls of a most ponderous metal, about the bigness of our heads, and requiring a strong hand to lift them: the other cell contained a heap of certain black grains, but of no great bulk or weight, for we could hold about fifty of them in the palms of our hands.

This is an exact inventory of what we found about the body of the Man-Mountain, who used us with great civility, and due respect to your Majesty's Commission. Signed and sealed on the fourth day of the eightyninth moon of your Majesty's auspicious reign.

CLEFRIN FRELOCK, MARS FRELOCK.

When this inventory was read over to the Emperor, he directed me, although in very gentle terms, to deliver up the several particulars. He first called for my scimitar, which I took out, scabbard and all. In the mean time he ordered three thousand of his choicest troops (who then attended him) to surround me at a distance, with their bows and arrows just ready to discharge: but I did not observe it, for my eyes were wholly fixed upon his Majesty. He then desired me to draw my scimitar, which, although it had got some rust by the sea-water, was in most parts exceeding bright. I did so, and immediately all the troops gave a shout between terror and surprise; for the sun shone clear, and the reflection dazzled their eyes, as I waved the scimitar to and fro in my hand. His Majesty, who is a most magnanimous prince, was less daunted than I could expect; he ordered me to return it into the scabbard, and cast it on the ground as gently as I could, about six foot from the end of my chain. The next thing he demanded, was one of the hollow iron pillars, by which he meant my pocket-pistols. I drew it out, and at his desire, as well as I could, expressed to him the use of it; and charging it only with powder, which, by the closeness of my pouch, hap-

pened to escape wetting in the sea (an inconvenience against which all prudent mariners take special care to provide,) I first cautioned the Emperor not to be afraid, and then I let it off in the air. The astonishment here was much greater than at the sight of my scimitar. Hundreds fell down as if they had been struck dead; and even the Emperor, although he stood his ground, could not recover himself in some time. I delivered up both my pistols in the same manner as I had done my scimitar, and then my pouch of powder and bullets; begging him that the former might be kept from fire, for it would kindle with the smallest spark, and blow up his imperial palace into the air. I likewise delivered up my watch, which the Emperor was very curious to see, and commanded two of his tallest yeomen of the guards to bear it on a pole upon their shoulders, as draymen in England do a barrel of ale. He was amazed at the continual noise it made, and the motion of the minute-hand, which he could easily discern; for their sight is much more acute than ours: and asked the opinions of his learned men about him, which were various and remote, as the reader may well imagine without my repeating; although indeed I could not very perfectly understand them. I then gave up my silver and copper money, my purse, with nine large pieces of gold, and some smaller ones; my knife and razor, my comb and silver snuff-box, my handkerchief and journal-book. My scimitar, pistols, and pouch, were conveyed in carriages to his Majesty's stores; but the rest of my goods were returned to me.

I had, as I before observed, one private pocket which escaped their search, wherein there was a pair of spectacles, (which I sometimes use for the weakness of my eyes) a pocket perspective, and several other little conveniences; which being of no consequence to the Emperor, I did not think myself bound in honor to discover, and I apprehended they might be lost or spoiled if I ventured them out of my possession.

CHAPTER III

The Author diverts the Emperor, and his nobility of both sexes, in a very uncommon manner. The diversions of the court of Lilliput described. The Author has his liberty granted him upon certain conditions.

My gentleness and good behavior had gained so far on the Emperor and his court, and indeed upon the army and people in general, that I began to conceive hopes of

getting my liberty in a short time. I took all possible methods to cultivate this favorable disposition. The natives came by degrees to be less apprehensive of any danger from me. I would sometimes lie down, and let five or six of them dance on my hand. And at last the boys and girls would venture to come and play at hide and seek in my hair. I had now made a good progress in understanding and speaking their language. The Emperor had a mind one day to entertain me with several of the country shows, wherein they exceed all nations I have known, both for dexterity and magnificence. I was diverted with none so much as that of the rope-dancers, performed upon a slender white thread, extended about two foot, and twelve inches from the ground. Upon which I shall desire liberty, with the reader's patience, to enlarge a little.

This diversion is only practised by those persons who are candidates for great employments, and high favor, at court. They are trained in this art from their youth, and are not always of noble birth, or liberal education. When a great office is vacant, either by death or disgrace, (which often happens) five or six of those candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a dance on the rope, and whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in the office. Very often the chief ministers themselves are commanded to show their skill, and to convince the Emperor that they have not lost their faculty. Flimnap, the Treasurer, is allowed to cut a caper on the straight rope, at least an inch higher than any other lord in the whole empire.¹ I have seen him do the summerset several times together upon a trencher fixed on the rope, which is no thicker than a common pack-thread in England. My friend Reldresal, Principal Secretary for Private Affairs, is, in my opinion, if I am not partial, the second after the Treasurer; the rest of the great officers are much upon a par.

These diversions are often attended with fatal accidents, whereof great numbers are on record. I myself have seen two or three candidates break a limb. But the danger is much greater when the ministers themselves are commanded to show their dexterity; for, by contending to excel themselves and their fellows, they strain so far, that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a fall, and some of them two or three. I was assured that a year or two before my arrival, Flimnap

would have infallibly broke his neck, if one of the King's cushions, that accidentally lay on the ground, had not weakened the force of his fall.²

There is likewise another diversion, which is only shown before the Emperor and Empress, and first minister, upon particular occasions. The Emperor lays on the table three fine silken threads of six inches long. One is blue, the other red, and the third green.² These threads are proposed as prizes for those persons whom the Emperor hath a mind to distinguish by a peculiar mark of his favor. The ceremony is performed in his Majesty's great chamber of state, where the candidates are to undergo a trial of dexterity very different from the former, and such as I have not observed the least resemblance of in any other country of the old or the new world. The Emperor holds a stick in his hands, both ends parallel to the horizon, while the candidates advancing one by one, sometimes leap over the stick, sometimes creep under it backwards and forwards several times, according as the stick is advanced or depressed. Sometimes the Emperor holds one end of the stick, and his first minister the other; sometimes the minister has it entirely to himself. Whoever performs his part with most agility, and holds out the longest in leaping and creeping, is rewarded with the blue-colored silk; the red is given to the next, and the green to the third, which they all wear girt twice round about the middle; and you see few great persons about this court, who are not adorned with one of these girdles.

The horses of the army, and those of the royal stables, having been daily led before me, were no longer shy, but would come up to my very feet without starting. The riders would leap them over my hand as I held it on the ground, and one of the Emperor's huntsmen, upon a larger courser, took my foot, shoe and all; which was indeed a prodigious leap. I had the good fortune to divert the Emperor one day after a very extraordinary manner. I desired he would order several sticks of two foot high, and the thickness of an ordinary cane, to be brought me; whereupon his Majesty commanded the master of his woods to give directions accordingly; and the next morning six woodmen arrived with as many carriages, drawn by eight horses to each. I took nine of these sticks, fixing them

¹ At one crisis of his career, Walpole was helped by the Duchess of Kendall, mistress of George I.

² The ribbons of the orders of the Garter, the Bath, the Thistle.

* Flimnap is probably intended to suggest Sir Robert Walpole.

firmly in the ground in a quadrangular figure, two foot and a half square. I took four other sticks, and tied them parallel at each corner, about two foot from the ground; then I fastened my handkerchief to the nine sticks that stood erect, and extended it on all sides, till it was tight as the top of a drum; and the four parallel sticks rising about five inches higher than the handkerchief, served as ledges on each side. When I had finished my work, I desired the Emperor to let a troop of his best horse, twenty-four in number, come and exercise upon this plain. His Majesty approved of the proposal, and I took them up, one by one, in my hands, ready mounted and armed, with the proper officers to exercise them. As soon as they got into order, they divided into two parties, performed mock skirmishes, discharged blunt arrows, drew their swords, fled and pursued, attacked and retired, and in short discovered the best military discipline I ever beheld. The parallel sticks secured them and their horses from falling over the stage; and the Emperor was so much delighted that he ordered this entertainment to be repeated several days, and once was pleased to be lifted up and give the word of command; and, with great difficulty, persuaded even the Empress herself to let me hold her in her close chair within two yards of the stage, from whence she was able to take a full view of the whole performance. It was my good fortune that no ill accident happened in these entertainments, only once a fiery horse, that belonged to one of the captains, pawing with his hoof, struck a hole in my handkerchief, and his foot slipping, he overthrew his rider and himself; but I immediately relieved them both, and covering the hole with one hand, I set down the troop with the other, in the same manner as I took them up. The horse that fell was strained in the left shoulder, but the rider got no hurt, and I repaired my handkerchief as well as I could; however, I would not trust to the strength of it any more in such dangerous enterprises.

About two or three days before I was set at liberty, as I was entertaining the court with these kind of feats, there arrived an express to inform his Majesty, that some of his subjects riding near the place where I was first taken up, had seen a great black substance lying on the ground, very oddly shaped, extending its edges round as wide as his Majesty's bedchamber, and rising up in the middle as high as a man; that it was no living creature, as they at first apprehended,

for it lay on the grass without motion, and some of them had walked round it several times: that by mounting upon each other's shoulders, they had got to the top, which was flat and even, and stamping upon it they found it was hollow within; that they humbly conceived it might be something belonging to the Man-Mountain; and if his Majesty pleased, they would undertake to bring it with only five horses. I presently knew what they meant, and was glad at heart to receive this intelligence. It seems upon my first reaching the shore after our shipwreck, I was in such confusion, that before I came to the place where I went to sleep, my hat, which I had fastened with a string to my head while I was rowing, and had stuck on all the time I was swimming, fell off after I came to land; the string, as I conjecture, breaking by some accident which I never observed, but thought my hat had been lost at sea. I intreated his Imperial Majesty to give orders it might be brought to me as soon as possible, describing to him the use and the nature of it: and the next day the waggoners arrived with it, but not in a very good condition; they had bored two holes in the brim, within an inch and half of the edge, and fastened two hooks in the holes; these hooks were tied by a long cord to the harness, and thus my hat was dragged along for above half an English mile; but the ground in that country being extremely smooth and level, it received less damage than I expected.

Two days after this adventure, the Emperor having ordered that part of his army which quarters in and about his metropolis to be in readiness, took a fancy of diverting himself in a very singular manner. He desired I would stand like a Colossus, with my legs as far asunder as I conveniently could. He then commanded his General (who was an old experienced leader, and a great patron of mine) to draw up the troops in close order, and march them under me; the foot by twenty-four in a breast, and the horse by sixteen, with drums beating, colors flying, and pikes advanced. This body consisted of three thousand foot, and a thousand horse. His Majesty gave orders, upon pain of death, that every soldier in his march should observe the strictest decency with regard to my person; which, however, could not prevent some of the younger officers from turning up their eyes as they passed under me. And, to confess the truth, my breeches were at that time in so ill a condition, that they afforded some opportunities for laughter and admiration.

I had sent so many memorials and petitions for my liberty, that his Majesty at length mentioned the matter, first in his cabinet, and then in a full council; where it was opposed by none, except Skyresh Bolgolam, who was pleased, without any provocation, to be my mortal enemy. But it was carried against him by the whole board, and confirmed by the Emperor. That minister was *Galbet*, or Admiral of the Realm, very much in his master's confidence, and a person well versed in affairs, but of a morose and sour complexion. However, he was at length persuaded to comply; but prevailed that the articles and conditions upon which I should be set free, and to which I must swear, should be drawn up by himself. These articles were brought to me by Skyresh Bolgolam in person, attended by two under-secretaries, and several persons of distinction. After they were read, I was demanded to swear to the performance of them; first in the manner of my own country, and afterwards in the method prescribed by their laws; which was to hold my right foot in my left hand, to place the middle finger of my right hand on the crown of my head, and my thumb on the tip of my right ear. But because the reader may be curious to have some idea of the style and manner of expression peculiar to that people, as well as to know the articles upon which I recovered my liberty, I have made a translation of the whole instrument word for word, as near as I was able, which I here offer to the public.

GOLBASTO MOMAREM EVLAME GURDILLO SHEFIN MULLY ULLY GUE, most mighty Emperor of Lilliput, delight and terror of the universe, whose dominions extend five thousand *blustrugs* (about twelve miles in circumference) to the extremities of the globe; monarch of all monarchs, taller than the sons of men; whose feet press down to the centre, and whose head strikes against the sun; at whose nod the princes of the earth shake their knees; pleasant as the spring, comfortable as the summer, fruitful as autumn, dreadful as winter. His most sublime Majesty proposeth to the Man-Mountain, lately arrived to our celestial dominions, the following articles, which by a solemn oath he shall be obliged to perform.

First, The Man-Mountain shall not depart from our dominions, without our licence under our great seal.

2d, He shall not presume to come into our metropolis, without our express order; at

which time, the inhabitants shall have two hours warning to keep within their doors.

3rd, The said Man-Mountain shall confine his walks to our principal high roads, and not offer to walk or lie down in a meadow or field of corn.

4th, As he walks the said roads, he shall take the utmost care not to trample upon the bodies of any of our loving subjects, their horses, or carriages, nor take any of our subjects into his hands, without their own consent.

5th, If an express requires extraordinary dispatch, the Man-Mountain shall be obliged to carry in his pocket the messenger and horse a six days journey once in every moon, and return the said messenger back (if so required) safe to our Imperial Presence.

6th, He shall be our ally against our enemies in the Island of Blefuscu, and do his utmost to destroy their fleet, which is now preparing to invade us.

7th, That the said Man-Mountain shall, at his times of leisure, be aiding and assisting our workmen, in helping to raise certain great stones, towards covering the wall of the principal park, and other our royal buildings.

8th, That the said Man-Mountain shall, in two moons' time, deliver in an exact survey of the circumference of our dominions by a computation of his own paces round the coast.

Lastly, That upon his solemn oath to observe all the above articles, the said Man-Mountain shall have a daily allowance of meat and drink sufficient for the support of 1728 of our subjects, with free access to our Royal Person, and other marks of our favor. Given at our Palace at Belfaborac the twelfth day of the ninety-first moon of our reign.

I swore and subscribed to these articles with great cheerfulness and content, although some of them were not so honorable as I could have wished; which proceeded wholly from the malice of Skyresh Bolgolam, the High-Admiral: whereupon my chains were immediately unlocked, and I was at full liberty; the Emperor himself in person did me the honor to be by at the whole ceremony. I made my acknowledgements by prostrating myself at his Majesty's feet: but he commanded me to rise; and after many gracious expressions, which, to avoid the censure of vanity, I shall not repeat, he added, that he hoped I should prove a useful servant, and well deserve all the favors he had already conferred upon me, or might do for the future.

The reader may please to observe, that in the last article for the recovery of my liberty, the Emperor stipulates to allow me a quantity of meat and drink sufficient for the support of 1728 Lilliputians. Some time after, asking a friend at court how they came to fix on that determinate number; he told me that his Majesty's mathematicians, having taken the height of my body, by the help of a quadrant, and finding it to exceed theirs in the proportion of twelve to one they concluded from the similarity of their bodies, that mine must contain at least 1728 of theirs, and consequently would require as much food as was necessary to support that number of Lilliputians. By which, the reader may conceive an idea of the ingenuity of that people, as well as the prudent and exact economy of so great a prince.

CHAPTER IV

Mildendo, the metropolis of Lilliput, described, together with the Emperor's palace. A conversation between the Author and a principal Secretary, concerning the affairs of that empire. The Author's offer to serve the Emperor in his wars.

The first request I made after I had obtained my liberty, was, that I might have licence to see Mildendo, the metropolis; which the Emperor easily granted me, but with a special charge to do no hurt either to the inhabitants or their houses. The people had notice by proclamation of my design to visit the town. The wall which encompassed it, is two foot and a half high, and at least eleven inches broad, so that a coach and horses may be driven very safely round it; and it is flanked with strong towers at ten foot distance. I stepped over the great Western Gate, and passed very gently, and sideling through the two principal streets, only in my short waistcoat, for fear of damaging the roofs and eaves of the houses with the skirts of my coat. I walked with the utmost circumspection, to avoid treading on any stragglers, that might remain in the streets, although the orders were very strict, that all people should keep in their houses, at their own peril. The garret windows and tops of houses were so crowded with spectators, that I thought in all my travels I had not seen a more populous place. The city is an exact square, each side of the wall being five hundred foot long. The two great streets, which run cross and divide it into four quarters, are five foot wide. The lanes and alleys,

which I could not enter, but only viewed them as I passed, are from twelve to eighteen inches. The town is capable of holding five hundred thousand souls. The houses are from three to five stories. The shops and markets well provided.

The Emperor's palace is in the centre of the city, where the two great streets meet. It is inclosed by a wall of two foot high, and twenty foot distant from the buildings. I had his Majesty's permission to step over this wall; and the space being so wide between that and the palace, I could easily view it on every side. The outward court is a square of forty foot, and includes two other courts: in the inmost are the royal apartments, which I was very desirous to see, but found it extremely difficult; for the great gates, from one square into another, were but eighteen inches high, and seven inches wide. Now the buildings of the outer court were at least five foot high, and it was impossible for me to stride over them without infinite damage to the pile, though the walls were strongly built of hewn stone, and four inches thick. At the same time the Emperor had a great desire that I should see the magnificence of his palace; but this I was not able to do till three days after, which I spent in cutting down with my knife some of the largest trees in the royal park, about an hundred yards distant from the city. Of these trees I made two stools, each about three foot high, and strong enough to bear my weight. The people having received notice a second time, I went again through the city to the palace, with my two stools in my hands. When I came to the side of the outer court, I stood upon one stool, and took the other in my hand: this I lifted over the roof, and gently set it down on the space between the first and second court, which was eight foot wide. I then stepped over the buildings very conveniently from one stool to the other, and drew up the first after me with a hooked stick. By this contrivance I got into the inmost court; and lying down upon my side, I applied my face to the windows of the middle stories, which were left open on purpose, and discovered the most splendid apartments that can be imagined. There I saw the Empress and the young Princes, in their several lodgings, with their chief attendants about them. Her Imperial Majesty was pleased to smile very graciously upon me, and gave me out of the window her hand to kiss.

But I shall not anticipate the reader with farther descriptions of this kind, because I re-

serve them for a greater work, which is now almost ready for the press, containing a general description of this empire, from its first erection, through a long series of princes, with a particular account of their wars and politics, laws, learning, and religion: their plants and animals, their peculiar manners and customs, with other matters very curious and useful; my chief design at present being only to relate such events and transactions as happened to the public, or to myself, during a residence of about nine months in that empire.

One morning, about a fortnight after I had obtained my liberty, Reldresal, Principal Secretary (as they style him) of Private Affairs, came to my house attended only by one servant. He ordered his coach to wait at a distance, and desired I would give him an hour's audience; which I readily consented to, on account of his quality and personal merits, as well as the many good offices he had done me during my solicitations at court. I offered to lie down, that he might the more conveniently reach my ear; but he chose rather to let me hold him in my hand during our conversation. He began with compliments on my liberty; said he might pretend to some merit in it: but, however, added, that if it had not been for the present situation of things at court, perhaps I might not have obtained it so soon. For, said he, as flourishing a condition as we may appear to be in to foreigners, we labor under two mighty evils; a violent faction at home, and the danger of an invasion by a most potent enemy from abroad. As to the first, you are to understand, that for about seventy moons past there have been two struggling parties in this empire, under the names of *Tramecksan* and *Slamecksan*, from the high and low heels on their shoes, by which they distinguish themselves.¹ It is alleged indeed, that the high heels are most agreeable to our ancient constitution: but however this be, his Majesty hath determined to make use of only low heels in the administration of the government, and all offices in the gift of the Crown, as you cannot but observe; and particularly, that his Majesty's Imperial heels are lower at least by a *drurr* than any of his court; (*drurr* is a measure about the fourteenth part of an inch). The animosities between these two parties run so high, that they will neither eat nor drink, nor talk with each other. We compute the *Tramecksan*, or High-Heels, to exceed us in number; but the

power is wholly on our side. We apprehend his Imperial Highness, the Heir to the Crown, to have some tendency towards the High-Heels; at least we can plainly discover one of his heels higher than the other, which gives him a hobble in his gait.² Now, in the midst of these intestine disquiets, we are threatened with an invasion from the Island of Blefuscu,³ which is the other great empire of the universe, almost as large and powerful as this of his Majesty. For as to what we have heard you affirm, that there are other kingdoms and states in the world inhabited by human creatures as large as yourself, our philosophers are in much doubt, and would rather conjecture that you dropped from the mobn, or one of the stars; because it is certain, that an hundred mortals of your bulk would, in a short time, destroy all the fruits and cattle of his Majesty's dominions. Besides, our histories of six thousand moons make no mention of any other regions, than the two great empires of Lilliput and Blefuscu. Which two mighty powers have, as I was going to tell you, been engaged in a most obstinate war for six and thirty moons past. It began upon the following occasion. It is allowed on all hands, that the primitive way of breaking eggs, before we eat them, was upon the larger end: but his present Majesty's grandfather,⁴ while he was a boy, going to eat an egg, and breaking it according to the ancient practice, happened to cut one of his fingers. Whereupon the Emperor his father published an edict, commanding all his subjects, upon great penalties, to break the smaller end of their eggs. The people so highly resented this law, that our histories tell us there have been six rebellions raised on that account; wherein one Emperor lost his life, and another his crown.⁴ These civil commotions were constantly fomented by the monarchs of Blefuscu; and when they were quelled, the exiles always fled for refuge to that empire. It is computed, that eleven thousand persons have, at several times, suffered death, rather than submit to break their eggs at the smaller end. Many hundred large volumes have been published upon this controversy: but the books of the Big-Endians have been long forbidden, and the whole party rendered incapable by law of holding employments. During the course of these

¹ George II, while Prince of Wales, had a foot in each political camp.

² Blefuscu stands for France, the hereditary foe of England.

³ Henry VIII. The Little-Endians are the Protestants; the Big-Endians, the Roman Catholics.

⁴ Charles I and James II.

troubles, the Emperors of Blefuscu did frequently expostulate by their ambassadors, accusing us of making a schism in religion, by offending against a fundamental doctrine of our great prophet Lustrog, in the fifty-fourth chapter of the Blundecral (which is their Alcoran). This, however, is thought to be a mere strain upon the text: for the words are these; *That all true believers break their eggs at the convenient end*: and which is the convenient end, seems, in my humble opinion, to be left to every man's conscience, or at least in the power of the chief magistrate to determine. Now the Big-Endian exiles have found so much credit in the Emperor of Blefuscu's court, and so much private assistance and encouragement from their party here at home, that a bloody war has been carried on between the two empires for six and thirty moons with various success; during which time we have lost forty capital ships, and a much greater number of smaller vessels, together with thirty thousand of our best seamen and soldiers; and the damage received by the enemy is reckoned to be somewhat greater than ours. However, they have now equipped a numerous fleet, and are just preparing to make a descent upon us; and his Imperial Majesty, placing great confidence in your valor and strength, has commanded me to lay this account of his affairs before you.

I desired the Secretary to present my humble duty to the Emperor, and to let him know, that I thought it would not become me, who was a foreigner, to interfere with parties; but I was ready, with the hazard of my life, to defend his person and state against all invaders.

CHAPTER V

The Author, by an extraordinary stratagem, prevents an invasion. A high title of honor is conferred upon him. Ambassadors arrive from the Emperor of Blefuscu, and sue for peace. The Empress's apartment on fire by an accident; the Author instrumental in saving the rest of the palace.

The Empire of Blefuscu is an island situated to the north north-east side of Lilliput, from whence it is parted only by a channel of eight hundred yards wide. I had not yet seen it, and upon this notice of an intended invasion, I avoided appearing on that side of the coast, for fear of being discovered by some of the enemy's ships, who had received no intelligence of me, all intercourse between

the two empires having been strictly forbidden during the war, upon pain of death, and an embargo laid by our Emperor upon all vessels whatsoever. I communicated to his Majesty a project I had formed of seizing the enemy's whole fleet: which, as our scouts assured us, lay at anchor in the harbor ready to sail with the first fair wind. I consulted the most experienced seamen, upon the depth of the channel, which they had often plumbed, who told me, that in the middle at high-water it was seventy *glumgluffs* deep, which is about six foot of European measure; and the rest of it fifty *glumgluffs* at most. I walked towards the north-east coast over against Blefuscu; and lying down behind a hillock, took out my small pocket perspective-glass, and viewed the enemy's fleet at anchor, consisting of about fifty men of war, and a great number of transports: I then came back to my house, and gave order (for which I had a warrant) for a great quantity of the strongest cable and bars of iron. The cable was about as thick as packthread, and the bars of the length and size of a knitting-needle. I trebled the cable to make it stronger, and for the same reason I twisted three of the iron bars together, binding the extremities into a hook. Having thus fixed fifty hooks to as many cables, I went back to the north-east coast, and putting off my coat, shoes, and stockings, walked into the sea in my leathern jerkin, about half an hour before high water. I waded with what haste I could, and swam in the middle about thirty yards till I felt ground; I arrived at the fleet in less than half an hour. The enemy was so frightened when they saw me, that they leaped out of their ships, and swam to shore, where there could not be fewer than thirty thousand souls. I then took my tackling, and fastening a hook to the hole at the prow of each, I tied all the cords together at the end. While I was thus employed, the enemy discharged several thousand arrows, many of which stuck in my hands and face; and besides the excessive smart, gave me much disturbance in my work. My greatest apprehension was for my eyes, which I should have infallibly lost, if I had not suddenly thought of an expedient. I kept among other little necessities a pair of spectacles in a private pocket, which, as I observed before, had scaped the Emperor's searchers. These I took out and fastened as strongly as I could upon my nose, and thus armed went on boldly with my work in spite of the enemy's arrows, many of which struck against the glasses of my spectacles,

but without any other effect, further than a little to discompose them. I had now fastened all the hooks, and taking the knot in my hand, began to pull; but not a ship would stir, for they were all too fast held by their anchors, so that the boldest part of my enterprise remained. I therefore let go the cord, and leaving the hooks fixed to the ships, I resolutely cut with my knife the cables that fastened the anchors, receiving about two hundred shots in my face and hands; then I took up the knotted end of the cables, to which my hooks were tied, and with great ease drew fifty of the enemy's largest men of war after me.

The Blefuscudians, who had not the least imagination of what I intended, were at first confounded with astonishment. They had seen me cut the cables, and thought my design was only to let the ships run a-drift, or fall foul on each other: but when they perceived the whole fleet moving in order, and saw me pulling at the end, they set up such a scream of grief and despair, that it is almost impossible to describe or conceive. When I had got out of danger, I stopped awhile to pick out the arrows that stuck in my hands and face; and rubbed on some of the same ointment that was given me at my first arrival, as I have formerly mentioned. I then took off my spectacles, and waiting about an hour, till the tide was a little fallen, I waded through the middle with my cargo, and arrived safe at the royal port of Lilliput.

The Emperor and his whole court stood on the shore, expecting the issue of this great adventure. They saw the ships move forward in a large half-moon, but could not discern me, who was up to my breast in water. When I advanced in the middle of the channel, they were yet in more pain, because I was under water to my neck. The Emperor concluded me to be drowned, and that the enemy's fleet was approaching in a hostile manner: but he was soon eased of his fears, for the channel growing shallower every step I made, I came in a short time within hearing, and holding up the end of the cable by which the fleet was fastened, I cried in a loud voice, *Long live the most puissant Emperor of Lilliput!* This great prince received me at my landing with all possible encomiums, and created me a *Nardac* upon the spot, which is the highest title of honor among them.

His Majesty desired I would take some other opportunity of bringing all the rest of his enemy's ships into his ports. And so unmeasurable is the ambition of princes,

that he seemed to think of nothing less than reducing the whole empire of Blefuscu into a province, and governing it by a viceroy; of destroying the Big-Endian exiles, and compelling the people to break the smaller end of their eggs, by which he would remain the sole monarch of the whole world. But I endeavored to divert him from this design, by many arguments drawn from the topics of policy as well as justice; and I plainly protested, that I would never be an instrument of bringing a free and brave people into slavery. And when the matter was debated in council, the wisest part of the ministry were of my opinion.

This open bold declaration of mine was so opposite to the schemes and politics of his Imperial Majesty, that he could never forgive it; he mentioned it in a very artful manner at council, where I was told that some of the wisest appeared, at least by their silence, to be of my opinion; but others, who were my secret enemies, could not forbear some expressions, which by a side-wind reflected on me. And from this time began an intrigue between his Majesty and a junto of ministers maliciously bent against me, which broke out in less than two months, and had like to have ended in my utter destruction. Of so little weight are the greatest services to princes, when put into the balance with a refusal to gratify their passions.

About three weeks after this exploit, there arrived a solemn embassy from Blefuscu, with humble offers of a peace; which was soon concluded upon conditions very advantageous to our Emperor, wherewith I shall not trouble the reader. There were six ambassadors, with a train of about five hundred persons, and their entry was very magnificent, suitable to the grandeur of their master, and the importance of their business. When their treaty was finished, wherein I did them several good offices by the credit I now had, or at least appeared to have at court, their Excellencies, who were privately told how much I had been their friend, made me a visit in form. They began with many compliments upon my valor and generosity, invited me to that kingdom in the Emperor their master's name, and desired me to show them some proofs of my prodigious strength, of which they had heard so many wonders; wherein I readily obliged them, but shall not trouble the reader with the particulars.

When I had for some time entertained their Excellencies, to their infinite satisfaction and surprise, I desired they would do me the

honor to present my most humble respects to the Emperor their master, the renown of whose virtues had so justly filled the whole world with admiration, and whose royal person I resolved to attend before I returned to my own country: accordingly, the next time I had the honor to see our Emperor, I desired his general licence to wait on the Blefusudian monarch, which he was pleased to grant me, as I could perceive, in a very cold manner; but could not guess the reason, till I had a whisper from a certain person that Flimnap and Bolgolam had represented my intercourse with those ambassadors as a mark of disaffection, from which I am sure my heart was wholly free. And this was the first time I began to conceive some imperfect idea of courts and ministers.

It is to be observed, that these ambassadors spoke to me by an interpreter, the languages of both empires differing as much from each other as any two in Europe, and each nation priding itself upon the antiquity, beauty, and energy of their own tongues, with an avowed contempt for that of their neighbor; yet our Emperor, standing upon the advantage he had got by the seizure of their fleet, obliged them to deliver their credentials, and make their speech in the Lilliputian tongue. And it must be confessed, that from the great intercourse of trade and commerce between both realms, from the continual reception of exiles, which is mutual among them, and from the custom in each empire to send their young nobility and richer gentry to the other, in order to polish themselves by seeing the world, and understanding men and manners; there are few persons of distinction, or merchants, or seamen, who dwell in the maritime parts, but what can hold conversation in both tongues; as I found some weeks after, when I went to pay my respects to the Emperor of Blefuscu, which in the midst of great misfortunes, through the malice of my enemies, proved a very happy adventure to me, as I shall relate in its proper place.

The reader may remember, that when I signed those articles upon which I recovered my liberty, there were some which I disliked upon account of their being too servile, neither could anything but an extreme necessity have forced me to submit. But being now a *Nardac* of the highest rank in that empire, such offices were looked upon as below my dignity, and the Emperor (to do him justice) never once mentioned them to me. However, it was not long before I had an opportunity of doing his Majesty, at least, as I then thought,

a most signal service. I was alarmed at midnight with the cries of many hundred people at my door; by which being suddenly awaked, I was in some kind of terror. I heard the word *burglum* repeated incessantly: several of the Emperor's court, making their way through the crowd, entreated me to come immediately to the palace, where her Imperial Majesty's apartment was on fire, by the carelessness of a maid of honor, who fell asleep while she was reading a romance. I got up in an instant; and orders being given to clear the way before me, and it being likewise a moonshine night, I made a shift to get to the palace without trampling on any of the people. I found they had already applied ladders to the walls of the apartment, and were well provided with buckets, but the water was at some distance. These buckets were about the size of a large thimble, and the poor people supplied me with them as fast as they could; but the flame was so violent that they did little good. I might easily have stifled it with my coat, which I unfortunately left behind me for haste, and came away only in my leathern jerkin. The case seemed wholly desperate and deplorable; and this magnificent palace would have infallibly been burnt down to the ground, if, by a presence of mind, unusual to me, I had not suddenly thought of an expedient. I had the evening before drunk plentifully of a most delicious wine, called *glimigrim*, (the Blefusudians call it *flunec*, but ours is esteemed the better sort) which is very diuretic. By the luckiest chance in the world, I had not discharged myself of any part of it. The heat I had contracted by coming very near the flames, and by laboring to quench them, made the wine begin to operate by urine; which I voided in such a quantity, and applied so well to the proper places, that in three minutes the fire was wholly extinguished, and the rest of that noble pile, which had cost so many ages in erecting, preserved from destruction.

It was now day-light, and I returned to my house without waiting to congratulate with the Emperor: because, although I had done a very eminent piece of service, yet I could not tell how his Majesty might resent the manner by which I had performed it: for, by the fundamental laws of the realm, it is capital in any person, of what quality soever, to make water within the precincts of the palace. But I was a little comforted by a message from his Majesty, that he would give orders to the Grand Justiciary for passing

my pardon in form; which, however, I could not obtain. And I was privately assured, that the Empress, conceiving the greatest abhorrence of what I had done, removed to the most distant side of the court, firmly resolved that those buildings should never be repaired for her use; and, in the presence of her chief confidants could not forbear vowing revenge.

CHAPTER VI

Of the inhabitants of Lilliput; their learning, laws, and customs, the manner of educating their children. The Author's way of living in that country. His vindication of a great lady.

Although I intend to leave the description of this empire to a particular treatise, yet in the mean time I am content to gratify the curious reader with some general ideas. As the common size of the natives is somewhat under six inches high, so there is an exact proportion in all other animals, as well as plants and trees: for instance, the tallest horses and oxen are between four and five inches in height, the sheep an inch and a half, more or less: their geese about the bigness of a sparrow, and so the several gradations downwards till you come to the smallest, which, to my sight, were almost invisible; but nature hath adapted the eyes of the Lilliputians to all objects proper for their view: they see with great exactness, but at no great distance. And to show the sharpness of their sight towards objects that are near, I have been much pleased with observing a cook pulling a lark, which was not so large as a common fly; and a young girl threading an invisible needle with invisible silk. Their tallest trees are about seven foot high: I mean some of those in the great royal park, the tops whereof I could but just reach with my fist clinched. The other vegetables are in the same proportion; but this I leave to the reader's imagination.

I shall say but little at present of their learning, which for many ages hath flourished in all its branches among them: but their manner of writing is very peculiar, being neither from the left to the right, like the Europeans; nor from the right to the left, like the Arabians; nor from up to down, like the Chinese; nor from down to up, like the Cascagians; but aslant from one corner of the paper to the other, like ladies in England.

They bury their dead with their heads directly downwards, because they hold an opinion, that in eleven thousand moons they

are all to rise again, in which period the earth (which they conceive to be flat) will turn upside down, and by this means they shall, at their resurrection, be found ready standing on their feet. The learned among them confess the absurdity of this doctrine, but the practice still continues, in compliance to the vulgar.

There are some laws and customs in this empire very peculiar; and if they were not so directly contrary to those of my own dear country, I should be tempted to say a little in their justification. It is only to be wished, that they were as well executed. The first I shall mention, relates to informers. All crimes against the state are punished here with the utmost severity; but if the person accused maketh his innocence plainly to appear upon his trial, the accuser is immediately put to an ignominious death; and out of his goods or lands, the innocent person is quadruply recompensed for the loss of his time, for the danger he underwent, for the hardship of his imprisonment, and for all the charges he hath been at in making his defence. Or, if that fund be deficient, it is largely supplied by the Crown. The Emperor does also confer on him some public mark of his favor, and proclamation is made of his innocence through the whole city.

They look upon fraud as a greater crime than theft, and therefore seldom fail to punish it with death; for they allege, that care and vigilance, with a very common understanding, may preserve a man's goods from thieves, but honesty has no fence against superior cunning; and since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual intercourse of buying and selling, and dealing upon credit, where fraud is permitted and connived at, or hath no law to punish it, the honest dealer is always undone, and the knave gets the advantage. I remember when I was once interceding with the Emperor for a criminal who had wronged his master of a great sum of money, which he had received by order, and ran away with; and happening to tell his Majesty, by way of extenuation, that it was only a breach of trust; the Emperor thought it monstrous in me to offer, as a defence, the greatest aggravation of the crime: and truly I had little to say in return, farther than the common answer, that different nations had different customs; for, I confess, I was heartily ashamed.

Although we usually call reward and punishment the two hinges upon which all government turns, yet I could never observe

this maxim to be put in practice by any nation except that of Lilliput. Whoever can there bring sufficient proof that he hath strictly observed the laws of his country for seventy-three moons, hath a claim to certain privileges, according to his quality and condition of life, with a proportionable sum of money out of a fund appropriated for that use: he likewise acquires the title of *Snilpall*, or Legal, which is added to his name, but does not descend to his posterity. And these people thought it a prodigious defect of policy among us, when I told them that our laws were enforced only by penalties, without any mention of reward. It is upon this account that the image of Justice, in their courts of judicature, is formed with six eyes, two before, as many behind, and on each side one, to signify circumspection; with a bag of gold open in her right hand, and a sword sheathed in her left, to show she is more disposed to reward than to punish.

In choosing persons for all employments, they have more regard to good morals than to great abilities; for, since government is necessary to mankind, they believe that the common size of human understandings is fitted to some station or other, and that Providence never intended to make the management of public affairs a mystery, to be comprehended only by a few persons of sublime genius, of which there seldom are three born in an age: but they suppose truth, justice, temperance, and the like, to be in every man's power; the practice of which virtues, assisted by experience and a good intention, would qualify any man for the service of his country, except where a course of study is required. But they thought the want of moral virtues was so far from being supplied by superior endowments of the mind, that employments could never be put into such dangerous hands as those of persons so qualified; and at least, that the mistakes committed by ignorance in a virtuous disposition, would never be of such fatal consequence to the public weal, as the practices of a man whose inclinations led him to be corrupt, and had great abilities to manage, and multiply, and defend his corruptions.

In like manner, the disbelief of a Divine Providence renders a man incapable of holding any public station; for, since kings avow themselves to be the deputies of Providence, the Lilliputians think nothing can be more absurd than for a prince to employ such men as disown the authority under which he acts.

In relating these and the following laws, I would only be understood to mean the original institutions, and not the most scandalous corruptions into which these people are fallen by the degenerate nature of man. For as to that infamous practice of acquiring great employments by dancing on the ropes, or badges of favor and distinction by leaping over sticks and creeping under them, the reader is to observe, that they were first introduced by the grandfather of the Emperor now reigning, and grew to the present height, by the gradual increase of party and faction.

Ingratitude is among them a capital crime, as we read it to have been in some other countries: for they reason thus, that whoever makes ill returns to his benefactor, must needs be a common enemy to the rest of mankind, from whom he hath received no obligation, and therefore such a man is not fit to live.

Their notions relating to the duties of parents and children differ extremely from ours. For, since the conjunction of male and female is founded upon the great law of nature, in order to propagate and continue the species, the Lilliputians will needs have it, that men and women are joined together like other animals, by the motives of concupiscence; and that their tenderness towards their young proceeds from the like natural principle: for which reason they will never allow, that a child is under any obligation to his father for begetting him, or to his mother for bringing him into the world, which, considering the miseries of human life, was neither a benefit in itself, nor intended so by his parents, whose thoughts in their love-encounters were otherwise employed. Upon these, and the like reasonings, their opinion is, that parents are the last of all others to be trusted with the education of their own children; and therefore they have in every town public nurseries, where all parents, except cottagers and laborers, are obliged to send their infants of both sexes to be reared and educated when they come to the age of twenty moons, at which time they are supposed to have some rudiments of docility. These schools are of several kinds, suited to different qualities, and to both sexes. They have certain professors well skilled in preparing children for such a condition of life as befits the rank of their parents, and their own capacities as well as inclinations. I shall first say something of the male nurseries, and then of the female.

The nurseries for males of noble or eminent

birth, are provided with grave and learned professors, and their several deputies. The clothes and food of the children are plain and simple. They are bred up in the principles of honor, justice, courage, modesty, clemency, religion, and love of their country; they are always employed in some business, except in the times of eating and sleeping, which are very short, and two hours for diversions, consisting of bodily exercises. They are dressed by men till four years of age, and then are obliged to dress themselves, although their quality be ever so great; and the women attendants, who are aged proportionably to ours at fifty, perform only the most menial offices. They are never suffered to converse with servants, but go together in small or greater numbers to take their diversions, and always in the presence of a professor, or one of his deputies; whereby they avoid those early bad impressions of folly and vice to which our children are subject. Their parents are suffered to see them only twice a year; the visit is to last but an hour. They are allowed to kiss the child at meeting and parting; but a professor, who always stands by on those occasions, will not suffer them to whisper, or use any fondling expressions, or bring any presents of toys, sweetmeats, and the like.

The pension from each family for the education and entertainment of a child, upon failure of due payment, is levied by the Emperor's officers.

The nurseries for children of ordinary gentlemen, merchants, traders, and handicrafts, are managed proportionably after the same manner; only those designed for trades, are put out apprentices at eleven years old, whereas those of persons of quality continue in their exercises till fifteen, which answers to one and twenty with us: but the confinement is gradually lessened for the last three years.

In the female nurseries, the young girls of quality are educated much like the males, only they are dressed by orderly servants of their own sex; but always in the presence of a professor or deputy, till they come to dress themselves, which is at five years old. And if it be found that these nurses ever presume to entertain the girl with frightful or foolish stories, or the common follies practiced by chambermaids among us, they are publicly whipped thrice about the city, imprisoned for a year, and banished for life to the most desolate part of the country. Thus the young ladies there are as much ashamed of being cowards and fools, as the men, and

despise all personal ornaments beyond decency and cleanliness: neither did I perceive any difference in their education, made by their difference of sex, only that the exercises of the females were not altogether so robust; and that some rules were given them relating to domestic life, and a smaller compass of learning was enjoined them: for their maxim is, that among people of quality, a wife should be always a reasonable and agreeable companion, because she cannot always be young. When the girls are twelve years old, which among them is the marriageable age, their parents or guardians take them home, with great expressions of gratitude to the professors, and seldom without tears of the young lady and her companions.

In the nurseries of females of the meaner sort, the children are instructed in all kinds of works proper for their sex, and their several degrees: those intended for apprentices, are dismissed at seven years old, the rest are kept to eleven.

The meaner families who have children at these nurseries, are obliged, besides their annual pension, which is as low as possible, to return to the steward of the nursery a small monthly share of their gettings, to be a portion for the child; and therefore all parents are limited in their expenses by the law. For the Lilliputians think nothing can be more unjust, than for people, in subservience to their own appetites, to bring children into the world, and leave the burthen of supporting them on the public. As to persons of quality, they give security to appropriate a certain sum for each child, suitable to their condition; and these funds are always managed with good husbandry, and the most exact justice.

The cottagers and laborers keep their children at home, their business being only to till and cultivate the earth, and therefore their education is of little consequence to the public; but the old and diseased among them are supported by hospitals: for begging is a trade unknown in this empire.

And here it may perhaps divert the curious reader, to give some account of my domestic, and my manner of living in this country, during a residence of nine months and thirteen days. Having a head mechanically turned, and being likewise forced by necessity, I had made for myself a table and chair convenient enough, out of the largest trees in the royal park. Two hundred sempstresses were employed to make me shirts, and linen for my bed and table, all of the

strongest and coarsest kind they could get; which, however, they were forced to quilt together in several folds, for the thickest was some degrees finer than lawn. Their linen was usually three inches wide, and three foot make a piece. The sempstresses took my measure as I lay on the ground, one standing at my neck, and another at my mid-leg, with a strong cord extended, that each held by the end, while the third measured the length of the cord with a rule an inch long. Then they measured my right thumb, and desired no more; for by a mathematical computation, that twice round the thumb is once round the wrist, and so on to the neck and the waist, and by the help of my old shirt, which I displayed on the ground before them for a pattern, they fitted me exactly. Three hundred tailors were employed in the same manner to make me clothes; but they had another contrivance for taking my measure. I kneeled down, and they raised a ladder from the ground to my neck; upon this ladder one of them mounted, and let fall a plumb-line from my collar to the floor, which just answered the length of my coat; but my waist and arms I measured myself. When my clothes were finished, which was done in my house, (for the largest of theirs would not have been able to hold them) they looked like the patch-work made by the ladies in England, only that mine were all of a color.

I had three hundred cooks to dress my victuals, in little convenient huts built about my house, where they and their families lived, and prepared me two dishes a-piece. I took up twenty waiters in my hand, and placed them on the table: an hundred more attended below on the ground, some with dishes of meat, and some with barrels of wine, and other liquors, slung on their shoulders; all which the waiters above drew up as I wanted, in a very ingenious manner, by certain cords, as we draw the bucket up a well in Europe. A dish of their meat was a good mouthful, and a barrel of their liquor a reasonable draught. Their mutton yields to ours, but their beef is excellent. I have had a sirloin so large, that I have been forced to make three bites of it; but this is rare. My servants were astonished to see me eat it bones and all, as in our country we do the leg of a lark. Their geese and turkeys I usually eat at a mouthful, and I must confess they far exceed ours. Of their smaller fowl I could take up twenty or thirty at the end of my knife.

One day his Imperial Majesty, being informed of my way of living, desired that himself and his Royal Consort, with the young Princes of the blood of both sexes, might have the happiness (as he was pleased to call it) of dining with me. They came accordingly, and I placed them in chairs of state on my table, just over against me, with their guards about them. Flimnap, the Lord High Treasurer, attended there likewise with his white staff; and I observed he often looked on me with a sour countenance, which I would not seem to regard, but eat more than usual, in honor to my dear country, as well as to fill the court with admiration. I have some private reasons to believe, that this visit from his Majesty gave Flimnap an opportunity of doing me ill offices to his master. That minister had always been my secret enemy, though he outwardly caressed me more than was usual to the moroseness of his nature. He represented to the Emperor the low condition of his treasury; that he was forced to take up money at great discount; that exchequer bills would not circulate under nine per cent. below par; that in short I had cost his Majesty above a million and a half of *sprugs* (their greatest gold coin, about the bigness of a spangle); and upon the whole, that it would be advisable in the Emperor to take the first fair occasion of dismissing me.

I am here obliged to vindicate the reputation of an excellent lady, who was an innocent sufferer upon my account. The Treasurer took a fancy to be jealous of his wife, from the malice of some evil tongues, who informed him that her Grace had taken a violent affection for my person; and the court-scandal ran for some time, that she once came privately to my lodging. This I solemnly declare to be a most infamous falsehood, without any grounds, farther than that her Grace was pleased to treat me with all innocent marks of freedom and friendship. I own she came often to my house, but always publicly, nor ever without three more in the coach, who were usually her sister and young daughter, and some particular acquaintance; but this was common to many other ladies of the court. And I still appeal to my servants round, whether they at any time saw a coach at my door without knowing what persons were in it. On those occasions, when a servant had given me notice, my custom was to go immediately to the door; and, after paying my respects, to take up the coach and two horses very carefully in my hands, (for, if

there were six horses, the postillion always unharnessed four) and place them on a table, where I had fixed a movable rim quite round, of five inches high, to prevent accidents. And I have often had four coaches and horses at once on my table full of company, while I sat in my chair leaning my face towards them; and when I was engaged with one set, the coachmen would gently drive the others round my table. I have passed many an afternoon very agreeably in these conversations. But I defy the Treasurer, or his two informers (I will name them, and let them make their best of it) Clustril and Drunlo, to prove that any person ever came to me *incognito*, except the secretary Reldresal, who was sent by express command of his Imperial Majesty, as I have before related. I should not have dwelt so long upon this particular, if it had not been a point wherein the reputation of a great lady is so nearly concerned, to say nothing of my own; though I then had the honor to be a *Nardac*, which the Treasurer himself is not; for all the world knows he is only a *Glumglum*, a title inferior by one degree, as that of a Marquis is to a Duke in England, although I allow he preceded me in right of his post. These false informations, which I afterwards came to the knowledge of, by an accident not proper to mention, made Flimnap, the Treasurer, show his lady for some time an ill countenance, and me a worse; and although he were at last undeceived and reconciled to her, yet I lost all credit with him, and found my interest decline very fast with the Emperor himself, who was indeed too much governed by that favorite.

CHAPTER VII

The Author, being informed of a design to accuse him of high-treason, makes his escape to Blefuscu. His reception there.

Before I proceed to give an account of my leaving this kingdom, it may be proper to inform the reader of a private intrigue which had been for two months forming against me.

I had been hitherto all my life a stranger to courts, for which I was unqualified by the meanness of my condition. I had indeed heard and read enough of the dispositions of great princes and ministers; but never expected to have found such terrible effects of them in so remote a country, governed, as I thought, by very different maxims from those in Europe.

When I was just preparing to pay my at-

tendance on the Emperor of Blefuscu, a considerable person at court (to whom I had been very serviceable at a time when he lay under the highest displeasure of his Imperial Majesty) came to my house very privately at night in a close chair, and without sending his name, desired admittance. The chairmen were dismissed; I put the chair, with his Lordship in it, into my coat-pocket; and giving orders to a trusty servant to say I was indisposed and gone to sleep, I fastened the door of my house, placed the chair on the table, according to my usual custom, and sat down by it. After the common salutations were over, observing his Lordship's countenance full of concern, and enquiring into the reason, he desired I would hear him with patience in a matter that highly concerned my honor and my life. His speech was to the following effect, for I took notes of it as soon as he left me:

"You are to know," said he, "that several Committees of Council have been lately called in the most private manner on your account; and it is but two days since his Majesty came to a full resolution.

"You are very sensible that Skyresh Bolgolah (*Galbet*, or High-Admiral) hath been your mortal enemy almost ever since your arrival. His original reasons I know not; but his hatred is much increased since your great success against Blefuscu, by which his glory, as Admiral, is obscured. This Lord, in conjunction with Flimnap the High-Treasurer, whose enmity against you is notorious on account of his lady, Limtoc the General, Lalcon the Chamberlain, and Balmuff the Grand Justiciary, have prepared articles of impeachment against you, for treason, and other capital crimes."

This preface made me so impatient, being conscious of my own merits and innocence, that I was going to interrupt; when he treated me to be silent, and thus proceeded:

"Out of gratitude for the favors you have done me, I procured information of the whole proceedings, and a copy of the articles, wherein I venture my head for your service."

Articles of Impeachment against Quinbus Flestrin (the Man-Mountain.)

ARTICLE I

Whereas, by a statute made in the reign of his Imperial Majesty Calin Deffar Plune, it is enacted, that whoever shall make water within the precincts of the royal palace, shall be liable to the pains and penalties

of high treason; notwithstanding, the said Quinbus Flestrin, in open breach of the said law, under color of extinguishing the fire kindled in the apartment of his Majesty's most dear Imperial Consort, did maliciously, traitorously, and devilishly, by discharge of his urine, put out the said fire kindled in the said apartment, lying and being within the precincts of the said royal palace, against the statute in that case provided, *etc.* against the duty, *etc.*

ARTICLE II

That the said Quinbus Flestrin having brought the imperial fleet of Blefuscu into the royal port, and being afterwards commanded by his Imperial Majesty to seize all the other ships of the said empire of Blefuscu, and reduce that empire to a province, to be governed by a viceroy from hence, and to destroy and put to death not only all the Big-Indian exiles, but likewise all the people of that empire, who would not immediately forsake the Big-Indian heresy: He, the said Flestrin, like a false traitor against his most Auspicious, Serene, Imperial Majesty, did petition to be excused from the said service, upon pretence of unwillingness to force the consciences, or destroy the liberties and lives of an innocent people.

ARTICLE III

That, whereas certain ambassadors arrived from the court of Blefuscu, to sue for peace in his Majesty's court: He, the said Flestrin, did, like a false traitor, aid, abet, comfort, and divert the said ambassadors, although he knew them to be servants to a Prince who was lately an open enemy to his Imperial Majesty, and in open war against his said Majesty.

ARTICLE IV

That the said Quinbus Flestrin, contrary to the duty of a faithful subject, is now preparing to make a voyage to the court and empire of Blefuscu, for which he hath received only verbal licence from his Imperial Majesty; and under color of the said licence, doth falsely and traitorously intend to take the said voyage, and thereby to aid, comfort, and abet the Emperor of Blefuscu, so late an enemy, and in open war with his Imperial Majesty aforesaid.

"There are some other articles, but these are the most important, of which I have read you an abstract.

"In the several debates upon this impeachment, it must be confessed that his Majesty gave many marks of his great lenity, often urging the services you had done him, and endeavoring to extenuate your crimes. The Treasurer and Admiral insisted that you should be put to the most painful and ignominious death, by setting fire on your house at night, and the General was to attend with twenty thousand men armed with poisoned arrows to shoot you on the face and hands. Some of your servants were to have private orders to strew a poisonous juice on your shirts, which would soon make you tear your own flesh, and die in the utmost torture. The General came into the same opinion; so that for a long time there was a majority against you. But his Majesty resolving, if possible, to spare your life, at last brought off the Chamberlain.

"Upon this incident, Reldresal, Principal Secretary for Private Affairs, who always approved himself your true friend, was commanded by the Emperor to deliver his opinion, which he accordingly did; and therein justified the good thoughts you have of him. He allowed your crimes to be great, but that still there was room for mercy, the most commendable virtue in a prince, and for which his Majesty was so justly celebrated. He said, the friendship between you and him was so well known to the world, that perhaps the most honorable board might think him partial: however, in obedience to the command he had received, he would freely offer his sentiments. That if his Majesty, in consideration of your services, and pursuant to his own merciful disposition, would please to spare your life, and only give orders to put out both your eyes, he humbly conceived, that by this expedient, justice might in some measure be satisfied, and all the world would applaud the lenity of the Emperor, as well as the fair and generous proceedings of those who have the honor to be his counsellors. That the loss of your eyes would be no impediment to your bodily strength, by which you might still be useful to his Majesty. That blindness is an addition to courage, by concealing dangers from us; that the fear you had for your eyes, was the greatest difficulty in bringing over the enemy's fleet, and it would be sufficient for you to see by the eyes of the ministers, since the greatest princes do no more.

"This proposal was received with the utmost disapprobation by the whole board. Bolgolam, the Admiral, could not preserve

his temper; but rising up in fury, said, he wondered how the Secretary durst presume to give his opinion for preserving the life of a traitor: that the services you had performed, were, by all true reasons of state, the great aggravation of your crimes; that you, who were able to extinguish the fire, by discharge of urine in her Majesty's apartment (which he mentioned with horror), might, at another time, raise an inundation by the same means, to drown the whole palace; and the same strength which enabled you to bring over the enemy's fleet, might serve, upon the first discontent, to carry it back: that he had good reasons to think you were a Big-Endian in your heart; and as treason begins in the heart, before it appears in overt acts, so he accused you as a traitor on that account, and therefore insisted you should be put to death.

"The Treasurer was of the same opinion; he showed to what straits his Majesty's revenue was reduced by the charge of maintaining you, which would soon grow insupportable: that the Secretary's expedient of putting out your eyes was so far from being a remedy against this evil, that it would probably increase it, as it is manifest from the common practice of blinding some kind of fowl, after which they fed the faster, and grew sooner fat: that his sacred Majesty and the Council, who are your judges, were in their own consciences fully convinced of your guilt, which was a sufficient argument to condemn you to death, without the formal proofs required by the strict letter of the law.

"But his Imperial Majesty, fully determined against capital punishment, was graciously pleased to say, that since the Council thought the loss of your eyes too easy a censure, some other may be inflicted hereafter. And your friend the Secretary humbly desiring to be heard again, in answer to what the Treasurer had objected concerning the great charge his Majesty was at in maintaining you, said, that his Excellency, who had the sole disposal of the Emperor's revenue, might easily provide against that evil, by gradually lessening your establishment; by which, for want of sufficient food, you would grow weak and faint, and lose your appetite, and consequently decay and consume in a few months; neither would the stench of your carcass be then so dangerous, when it should become more than half diminished; and immediately upon your death, five or six thousand of his Majesty's subjects might, in two or three days, cut your flesh from your bones, take it away by cart-loads, and bury it in distant

parts to prevent infection, leaving the skeleton as a monument of admiration to posterity.

"Thus by the great friendship of the Secretary, the whole affair was compromised. It was strictly enjoined, that the project of starving you by degrees should be kept a secret, but the sentence of putting out your eyes was entered on the books; none dissenting except Bolgolam the Admiral, who, being a creature of the Empress, was perpetually instigated by her Majesty to insist upon your death, she having borne perpetual malice against you, on account of that infamous and illegal method you took to extinguish the fire in her apartment.

"In three days your friend the Secretary will be directed to come to your house, and read before you the articles of impeachment; and then to signify the great lenity and favor of his Majesty and Council, whereby you are only condemned to the loss of your eyes, which his Majesty doth not question you will gratefully and humbly submit to; and twenty of his Majesty's surgeons will attend, in order to see the operation well performed, by discharging very sharp-pointed arrows into the balls of your eyes, as you lie on the ground.

"I leave to your prudence what measures you will take; and to avoid suspicion, I must immediately return in as private a manner as I came."

His Lordship did so, and I remained alone, under many doubts and perplexities of mind.

It was a custom introduced by this prince and his ministry (very different, as I have been assured, from the practices of former times,) that after the court had decreed any cruel execution, either to gratify the monarch's resentment, or the malice of a favorite, the Emperor always made a speech to his whole Council, expressing his great lenity and tenderness, as qualities known and confessed by all the world. This speech was immediately published through the kingdom; nor did any thing terrify the people so much as those encomiums on his Majesty's mercy; because it was observed, that the more these praises were enlarged and insisted on, the more inhuman was the punishment, and the sufferer more innocent. And as to myself, I must confess, having never been designed for a courtier either by my birth or education, I was so ill a judge of things, that I could not discover the lenity and favor of his sentence, but conceived it (perhaps erroneously) rather to be rigorous than gentle. I some-

times thought of standing my trial, for although I could not deny the facts alleged in the several articles, yet I hoped they would admit of some extenuations. But having in my life perused many state-trials, which I ever observed to terminate as the judges thought fit to direct, I durst not rely on so dangerous a decision, in so critical a juncture, and against such powerful enemies. Once I was strongly bent upon resistance, for while I had liberty, the whole strength of that empire could hardly subdue me, and I might easily with stones pelt the metropolis to pieces; but I soon rejected that project with horror, by remembering the oath I had made to the Emperor, the favors I received from him, and the high title of *Nardac* he conferred upon me. Neither had I so soon learned the gratitude of courtiers, to persuade myself that his Majesty's present severities acquitted me of all past obligations.

At last I fixed upon a resolution, for which it is probable I may incur some censure, and not unjustly; for I confess I owe the preserving my eyes, and consequently my liberty, to my own great rashness and want of experience: because if I had then known the nature of princes and ministers, which I have since observed in many other courts, and their methods of treating criminals less obnoxious than myself, I should with great alacrity and readiness have submitted to so easy a punishment. But hurried on by the precipitancy of youth, and having his Imperial Majesty's licence to pay my attendance upon the Emperor of Blefuscu, I took this opportunity, before the three days were elapsed, to send a letter to my friend the Secretary, signifying my resolution of setting out that morning for Blefuscu pursuant to the leave I had got; and without waiting for an answer, I went to that side of the island where our fleet lay. I seized a large man of war, tied a cable to the prow, and, lifting up the anchors, I stripped myself, put my clothes (together with my coverlet, which I brought-under my arm) into the vessel, and drawing it after me between wading and swimming, arrived at the royal port of Blefuscu, where the people had long expected me: they lent me two guides to direct me to the capital city, which is of the same name. I held them in my hands till I came within two hundred yards of the gate, and desired them to signify my arrival to one of the secretaries, and let him know, I there waited his Majesty's command. I had an answer in about an hour, that his Majesty, attended by

the Royal Family, and great officers of the court, was coming out to receive me. I advanced a hundred yards. The Emperor and his train alighted from their horses, the Empress and ladies from their coaches, and I did not perceive they were in any fright or concern. I lay on the ground to kiss his Majesty's and the Empress's hands. I told his Majesty, that I was come according to my promise, and with the licence of the Emperor my master, to have the honor of seeing so mighty a monarch, and to offer him any service in my power, consistent with my duty to my own prince; not mentioning a word of my disgrace, because I had hitherto no regular information of it, and might suppose myself wholly ignorant of any such design; neither could I reasonably conceive that the Emperor would discover the secret while I was out of his power: wherein, however, it soon appeared I was deceived.

I shall not trouble the reader with the particular account of my reception at this court, which was suitable to the generosity of so great a prince; nor of the difficulties I was in for want of a house and bed, being forced to lie on the ground, wrapped up in my coverlet.

CHAPTER VIII

The Author, by a lucky accident, finds means to leave Blefuscu; and, after some difficulties, returns safe to his native country.

Three days after my arrival, walking out of curiosity to the north-east coast of the island, I observed, about half a league off, in the sea, somewhat that looked like a boat overturned. I pulled off my shoes and stockings, and wading two or three hundred yards, I found the object to approach nearer by force of the tide; and then plainly saw it to be a real boat, which I supposed might, by some tempest, have been driven from a ship; whereupon I returned immediately towards the city, and desired his Imperial Majesty to lend me twenty of the tallest vessels he had left after the loss of his fleet, and three thousand seamen under the command of his Vice-Admiral. This fleet sailed round, while I went back the shortest way to the coast where I first discovered the boat; I found the tide had driven it still nearer. The seamen were all provided with cordage, which I had beforehand twisted to a sufficient strength. When the ships came up, I stripped myself, and waded till I came within an hundred yards of the boat, after which I was forced

to swim till I got up to it. The seamen threw me the end of the cord, which I fastened to a hole in the fore-part of the boat, and the other end to a man of war; but I found all my labor to little purpose; for being out of my depth, I was not able to work. In this necessity, I was forced to swim behind, and push the boat forwards as often as I could, with one of my hands; and the tide favoring me, I advanced so far, that I could just hold up my chin and feel the ground. I rested two or three minutes, and then gave the boat another shove, and so on till the sea was no higher than my arm-pits; and now the most laborious part being over, I took out my other cables, which were stowed in one of the ships, and fastening them first to the boat, and then to nine of the vessels which attended me; the wind being favorable, the seamen towed, and I shoved till we arrived within forty yards of the shore; and waiting till the tide was out, I got dry to the boat, and by the assistance of two thousand men, with ropes and engines, I made a shift to turn it on its bottom, and found it was but little damaged.

I shall not trouble the reader with the difficulties I was under by the help of certain paddles, which cost me ten days making, to get my boat to the royal port of Blefuscu, where a mighty concourse of people appeared upon my arrival, full of wonder at the sight of so prodigious a vessel. I told the Emperor that my good fortune had thrown this boat in my way, to carry me to some place from whence I might return into my native country, and begged his Majesty's orders for getting materials to fit it up, together with his licence to depart; which, after some kind expostulations, he was pleased to grant.

I did very much wonder, in all this time, not to have heard of any express relating to me from our Emperor to the court of Blefuscu. But I was afterwards given privately to understand, that his Imperial Majesty, never imagining I had the least notice of his designs, believed I was only gone to Blefuscu in performance of my promise, according to the licence he had given me, which was well known at our court, and would return in a few days when that ceremony was ended. But he was at last in pain at my long absence; and after consulting with the Treasurer, and the rest of that cabal, a person of quality was dispatched with the copy of the articles against me. This envoy had instructions to represent to the monarch of Blefuscu, the great lenity of his master, who was con-

tent to punish me no farther than with the loss of my eyes; that I had fled from justice, and if I did not return in two hours, I should be deprived of my title of *Nardac*, and declared a traitor. The envoy further added, that in order to maintain the peace and amity between both empires, his master expected, that his brother of Blefuscu would give orders to have me sent back to Lilliput, bound hand and foot, to be punished as a traitor.

The Emperor of Blefuscu having taken three days to consult, returned an answer consisting of many civilities and excuses. He said, that as for sending me bound, his brother knew it was impossible; that although I had deprived him of his fleet, yet he owed great obligations to me for many good offices I had done him in making the peace. That however both their Majesties would soon be made easy; for I had found a prodigious vessel on the shore, able to carry me on the sea, which he had given order to fit up with my own assistance and direction; and he hoped in a few weeks both empires would be freed from so insupportable an incumbrance.

With this answer the envoy returned to Lilliput, and the monarch of Blefuscu related to me all that had passed; offering me at the same time (but under the strictest confidence) his gracious protection, if I would continue in his service; wherein although I believed him sincere, yet I resolved never more to put any confidence in princes or ministers, where I could possibly avoid it; and therefore, with all due acknowledgements for his favorable intentions, I humble begged to be excused. I told him, that since fortune, whether good or evil, had thrown a vessel in my way, I was resolved to venture myself in the ocean, rather than be an occasion of difference between two such mighty monarchs. Neither did I find the Emperor at all displeased; and I discovered by a certain accident, that he was very glad of my resolution, and so were most of his ministers.

These considerations moved me to hasten my departure somewhat sooner than I intended; to which the court, impatient to have me gone, very readily contributed. Five hundred workmen were employed to make two sails to my boat, according to my directions, by quilting thirteen fold of their strongest linen together. I was at the pains of making ropes and cables, by twisting ten, twenty or thirty of the thickest and strongest of theirs. A great stone that I happened to find, after a long search, by the sea-shore,

served me for an anchor. I had the tallow of three hundred cows for greasing my boat, and other uses. I was at incredible pains in cutting down some of the largest timber-trees for oars and masts, wherein I was, however, much assisted by his Majesty's ship-carpenters, who helped me in smoothing them, after I had done the rough work.

In about a month, when all was prepared, I sent to receive his Majesty's commands, and take my leave. The Emperor and Royal Family came out of the palace; I lay down on my face to kiss his hand, which he very graciously gave me: so did the Empress and young Princes of the blood. His Majesty presented me with fifty purses of two hundred *sprugs* a-piece, together with his picture at full length, which I put immediately into one of my gloves, to keep it from being hurt. The ceremonies at my departure were too many to trouble the reader with at this time.

I stored the boat with the carcasses of an hundred oxen, and three hundred sheep, with bread and drink proportionable, and as much meat ready dressed as four hundred cooks could provide. I took with me six cows and two bulls alive, with as many ewes and rams, intending to carry them into my own country, and propagate the breed. And to feed them on board, I had a good bundle of hay, and a bag of corn. I would gladly have taken a dozen of the natives, but this was a thing the Emperor would by no means permit; and besides a diligent search into my pockets, his Majesty engaged my honor not to carry away any of his subjects, although with their own consent and desire.

Having thus prepared all things as well as I was able, I set sail on the twenty-fourth day of September 1701, at six in the morning; and when I had gone about four leagues to the northward, the wind being at south-east, at six in the evening I descried a small island about half a league to the north-west. I advanced forward, and cast anchor on the lee-side of the island, which seemed to be uninhabited. I then took some refreshment, and went to my rest. I slept well, and as I conjecture at least six hours, for I found the day broke in two hours after I awaked. It was a clear night. I eat my breakfast before the sun was up; and heaving anchor, the wind being favorable, I steered the same course that I had done the day before, wherein I was directed by my pocket-compass. My intention was to reach, if possible, one of those islands, which I had reason to believe lay to the north-east of Van Diemen's Land. I dis-

covered nothing all that day; but upon the next, about three in the afternoon, when I had by my computation made twenty-four leagues from Blefuscu, I descried a sail steering to the south-east; my course was due east. I hailed her, but could get no answer; yet I found I gained upon her, for the wind slackened. I made all the sail I could, and in half an hour she spied me, then hung out her ancient, and discharged a gun. It is not easy to express the joy I was in upon the unexpected hope of once more seeing my beloved country, and the dear pledges I had left in it. The ship slackened her sails, and I came up with her between five and six in the evening, September 26; but my heart leaped within me to see her English colors. I put my cows and sheep into my coat-pockets, and got on board with all my little cargo of provisions. The vessel was an English merchantman, returning from Japan by the North and South Seas; the Captain, Mr. John Biddel of Deptford, a very civil man, and an excellent sailor. We were now in the latitude of 30 degrees south; there were about fifty men in the ship; and here I met an old comrade of mine, one Peter Williams, who gave me a good character to the Captain. This gentleman treated me with kindness, and desired I would let him know what place I came from last, and whither I was bound; which I did in a few words, but he thought I was raving, and that the dangers I underwent had disturbed my head; whereupon I took my black cattle and sheep out of my pocket, which, after great astonishment, clearly convinced him of my veracity. I then showed him the gold given me by the Emperor of Blefuscu, together with his Majesty's picture at full length, and some other rarities of that country. I gave him two purses of two hundred *sprugs* each, and promised, when we arrived in England, to make him a present of a cow and a sheep big with young.

I shall not trouble the reader with a particular account of this voyage, which was very prosperous for the most part. We arrived in the Downs on the 13th of April, 1702. I had only one misfortune, that the rats on board carried away one of my sheep; I found her bones in a hole, picked clean from the flesh. The rest of my cattle I got safe on shore, and set them a grazing in a bowling-green at Greenwich, where the fineness of the grass made them feed very heartily, though I had always feared the contrary: neither could I possibly have preserved them in so long a voyage, if the Captain had not

allowed me some of his best biscuit, which, rubbed to powder, and mingled with water, was their constant food. The short time I continued in England, I made a considerable profit by showing my cattle to many persons of quality, and others: and before I began my second voyage, I sold them for six hundred pounds. Since my last return, I find the breed is considerably increased, especially the sheep; which I hope will prove much to the advantage of the woollen manufacture, by the fineness of the fleeces.

I stayed but two months with my wife and family; for my insatiable desire of seeing foreign countries would suffer me to continue no longer. I left fifteen hundred pounds with my wife, and fixed her in a good house at Redriff. My remaining stock I carried with me, part in money, and part in goods, in hopes to improve my fortunes. My eldest uncle John had left me an estate in land, near Epping, of about thirty pounds a year; and I had a long lease of the Black Bull in Fetter-Lane, which yielded me as much more; so that I was not in any danger of leaving my family upon the parish. My son Johnny, named so after his uncle, was at the Grammar School, and a towardly child. My daughter Betty (who is now well married, and has children) was then at her needle-work. I took leave of my wife, and boy and girl, with tears on both sides, and went on board the *Adventure*, a merchant-ship of three hundred tons, bound for Surat, Captain John Nicholas, of Liverpool, Commander. But my account of this voyage must be referred to the second part of my Travels.

The End of the First Part

AN ARGUMENT

TO PROVE THAT THE ABOLISHING OF

CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND

MAY, AS THINGS NOW STAND, BE ATTENDED WITH SOME INCONVENIENCES, AND PERHAPS NOT PRODUCE THOSE MANY GOOD EFFECTS PROPOSED THEREBY

1708

Despite his misanthropy, which can hardly be called Christian, the Reverend Jonathan Swift was a staunch and loyal Churchman, and the bitter opponent of that French school of philosophy known as Deism, which sought to discredit the Christian religion and to substitute for it what was called the "religion of nature"—a creed arrived at by eliminating from Christian teaching all elements which are not

also present in the other great religions of the world, Judaism, Mohametanism, the religion of ancient Greece and Rome. Such a creed, its supporters declared, derived its sanction from the universal consent of human reason, and stood in no need of supernatural revelation. In his *Arguement against Abolishing Christianity*, Swift supposes that the "free-thinkers" have formally proposed the abolition of Christianity in England, and proceeds to argue against so radical a step. But the brilliant irony of his "argument" is directed not so much against the avowed "free-thinkers" as against that great mass of professing Christians to whom their religion is no more than an empty formula and a set of comfortably established social conventions. "I hope no reader imagines me so weak as to stand up in the defence of real Christianity, such as used in primitive times to have an influence upon men's belief and actions." Swift's ironical defense of "nominal Christianity" is in reality a crushing indictment of our smug hypocrisies.

I am very sensible what a weakness and presumption it is to reason against the general humor and disposition of the world. I remember it was, with great justice, and due regard to the freedom both of the public and the press, forbidden, upon several penalties, to write, or discourse, or lay wagers against the Union, even before it was confirmed by parliament; because that was looked upon as a design to oppose the current of the people, which, beside the folly of it, is a manifest breach of the fundamental law, that makes this majority of opinion the voice of God. In like manner, and for the very same reasons, it may perhaps be neither safe nor prudent to argue against the abolishing of Christianity, at a juncture when all parties appear so unanimously determined upon the point, as we cannot but allow from their actions, their discourses, and their writings. However, I know not how, whether from the affectation of singularity, or the perverseness of human nature, but so it unhappily falls out, that I cannot be entirely of this opinion. Nay, though I were sure an order were issued for my immediate prosecution by the attorney-general, I should still confess that, in the present posture of our affairs at home or abroad, I do not yet see the absolute necessity of extirpating the Christian religion from among us.

This, perhaps, may appear too great a paradox even for our wise and paradoxical age to endure; therefore I shall handle it with all tenderness, and with the utmost deference to that great and profound majority which is of another sentiment.

And yet the curious may please to observe how much the genius of a nation is liable to alter in half an age. I have heard it affirmed for certain, by some very old people, that the contrary opinion was, even in their memories, as much in vogue as the other is now; and that a project for the abolishing of Christianity would then have appeared as singular, and been thought as absurd, as it would be, at this time, to write or discourse in its defence.

Therefore I freely own that all appearances are against me. The system of the gospel, after the fate of other systems, is generally antiquated and exploded: and the mass or body of the common people, among whom it seems to have had its latest credit, are now grown as much ashamed of it as their betters; opinions like fashions always descending from those of quality to the middle sort, and thence to the vulgar, where at length they are dropped and vanish.

But here I would not be mistaken, and must therefore be so bold as to borrow a distinction from the writers on the other side, when they make a difference between nominal and real Trinitarians. I hope no reader imagines me so weak as to stand up in the defence of real Christianity, such as used in primitive times (if we may believe the authors of those ages) to have an influence upon men's belief and actions: to offer at the restoring of that would indeed be a wild project; it would be to dig up foundations; to destroy at one blow all the wit and half the learning of the kingdom; to break the entire frame and constitution of things; to ruin trade, extinguish arts and sciences, with the professors of them; in short, to turn our courts, exchanges, and shops into deserts; and would be full as absurd as the proposal of Horace, where he advises the Romans all in a body to leave their city, and seek a new seat in some remote part of the world, by way of cure for the corruption of their manners.

Therefore I think this caution was in itself altogether unnecessary (which I have inserted only to prevent all possibility of cavilling), since every candid reader will easily understand my discourse to be intended only in defence of nominal Christianity; the other having been for some time wholly laid aside by general consent, as utterly inconsistent with our present schemes of wealth and power.

But why we should therefore cast off the name and title of Christians, although the general opinion and resolution be so violent

for it, I confess I cannot (with submission) apprehend, nor is the consequence necessary. However, since the undertakers propose such wonderful advantages to the nation by this project, and advance many plausible objections against the system of Christianity, I shall briefly consider the strength of both, fairly allow them their greatest weight, and offer such answers as I think most reasonable. After which I will beg leave to show what inconveniences may possibly happen by such an innovation, in the present posture of our affairs.

First, one great advantage proposed by the abolishing of Christianity is, that it would very much enlarge and establish liberty of conscience, that great bulwark of our nation, and of the Protestant religion; which is still too much limited by priestcraft, notwithstanding all the good intentions of the legislature, as we have lately found by a severe instance. For it is confidently reported that two young gentlemen of real hopes, bright wit, and profound judgment, who, upon a thorough examination of causes and effects, and by the mere force of natural abilities, without the least tincture of learning, having made a discovery that there was no God, and generously communicating their thoughts for the good of the public, were some time ago, by an unparalleled severity, and upon I know not what obsolete law, broke for blasphemy. And as it has been wisely observed, if persecution once begins, no man alive knows how far it may reach or where it will end.

In answer to all which, with deference to wiser judgments, I think this rather shows the necessity of a nominal religion among us. Great wits love to be free with the highest objects; and if they cannot be allowed a God to revile or renounce, they will speak evil of dignities, abuse the government, and reflect upon the ministry; which I am sure few will deny to be of much more pernicious consequence, according to the saying of Tiberius, *deorum offensa diis curæ*.¹ As to the particular fact related, I think it is not fair to argue from one instance, perhaps another cannot be produced: yet (to the comfort of all those who may be apprehensive of persecution) blasphemy, we know, is freely spoken a million of times in every coffee-house and tavern, or wherever else good company meet. It must be allowed, indeed, that, to break an English free-born officer only for blasphemy was, to speak the gentlest of such an action, a very

¹ "Offences against the gods are the concern of the gods."

high strain of absolute power. Little can be said in excuse for the general: perhaps he was afraid it might give offence to the allies, among whom, for aught we know, it may be the custom of the country to believe a God. But if he argued, as some have done, upon a mistaken principle, that an officer who is guilty of speaking blasphemy may some time or other proceed so far as to raise a mutiny, the consequence is by no means to be admitted; for surely the commander of an English army is likely to be but ill obeyed whose soldiers fear and reverence him as little as they do a Deity.

It is further objected against the gospel system, that it obliges men to the belief of things too difficult for free-thinkers, and such who have shaken off the prejudices that usually cling to a confined education. To which I answer, that men should be cautious how they raise objections which reflect upon the wisdom of the nation. Is not everybody freely allowed to believe whatever he pleases, and to publish his belief to the world whenever he thinks fit, especially if it serves to strengthen the party which is in the right? Would any indifferent foreigner, who should read the trumpery lately written by Asgil, Tindal, Toland, Coward,¹ and forty more, imagine the gospel to be our rule of faith, and confirmed by parliaments? Does any man either believe, or say he believes, or desire to have it thought that he says he believes, one syllable of the matter? And is any man worse received upon that score, or does he find his want of nominal faith a disadvantage to him in the pursuit of any civil or military employment? What if there be an old dormant statute or two against him, are they not now obsolete to a degree, that Empson and Dudley² themselves, if they were now alive, would find it impossible to put them in execution?

It is likewise urged that there are, by computation, in this kingdom, above ten thousand parsons, whose revenues, added to those of my lords the bishops, would suffice to maintain at least two hundred young gentlemen of wit and pleasure, and free-thinking, enemies to priestcraft, narrow principles, pedantry, and prejudices, who might be an ornament to the court and town: and then again, so great a number of able divines might be a recruit to our fleet and armies. This, indeed, appears to be a consideration of

some weight; but then, on the other side, several things deserve to be considered likewise: as first, whether it may not be thought necessary that in certain tracts of country, like what we call parishes, there shall be one man at least of abilities to read and write. Then it seems a wrong computation, that the revenues of the church throughout this island would be large enough to maintain two hundred young gentlemen, or even half that number, after the present refined way of living; that is, to allow each of them such a rent as, in the modern form of speech, would make them easy. But still there is in this project a greater mischief behind; and we ought to beware of the woman's folly, who killed the hen that every morning laid her a golden egg. For, pray what would become of the race of men in the next age, if we had nothing to trust to beside the scrofulous, consumptive productions furnished by our men of wit and pleasure, when, having squandered away their vigor, health, and estates, they are forced, by some disagreeable marriage, to piece up their broken fortunes, and entail rottenness and politeness on their posterity? Now, here are ten thousand persons reduced, by the wise regulations of Henry VIII, to the necessity of a low diet and moderate exercise, who are the only great restorers of our breed, without which the nation would in an age or two become one great hospital.

Another advantage proposed by the abolishing of Christianity, is the clear gain of one day in seven, which is now entirely lost, and consequently the kingdom one-seventh less considerable in trade, business, and pleasure; besides the loss to the public of so many stately structures, now in the hands of the clergy, which might be converted into play-houses, market-houses, exchanges, common dormitories, and other public edifices.

I hope I shall be forgiven a hard word, if I call this a perfect *cavil*. I readily own there has been an old custom, time out of mind, for people to assemble in the churches every Sunday, and that shops are still frequently shut, in order, as it is conceived, to preserve the memory of that ancient practice; but how this can prove a hindrance to business or pleasure is hard to imagine. What if the men of pleasure are forced, one day in the week, to game at home instead of the chocolate-houses? are not the taverns and coffee-houses open? can there be a more convenient season for taking a dose of physic? are fewer claps got upon Sundays than other days? is not that the chief day for traders to

¹ Notorious deists and "free-thinkers."

² English politicians of the reign of Henry VII, who rigorously put in execution obsolete tax laws.

sum up the accounts of the week, and for lawyers to prepare their briefs? But I would fain know how it can be pretended that the churches are misapplied? where are more appointments and rendezvouses of gallantry? where more care to appear in the foremost box, with greater advantage of dress? where more meetings for business? where more bargains driven of all sorts? and where so many conveniences or incitements to sleep?

There is one advantage greater than any of the foregoing proposed by the abolishing of Christianity; that it will utterly extinguish parties among us, by removing those factious distinctions of high and low church, of Whig and Tory, Presbyterian and Church of England, which are now so many grievous clogs upon public proceedings, and are apt to dispose men to prefer the gratifying of themselves, or depressing of their adversaries, before the most important interests of the state.

I confess, if it were certain that so great an advantage would redound to the nation by this expedient, I would submit and be silent; but will any man say that, if the words *whoring, drinking, cheating, lying, stealing* were, by act of parliament, ejected out of the English tongue and dictionaries, we should all awake next morning chaste and temperate, honest and just, and lovers of truth? Is this a fair consequence? Or, if the physicians would forbid us to pronounce the words *pox, gout, rheumatism, and stone*, would that expedient serve, like so many talismans, to destroy the diseases themselves? Are party and faction rooted in men's hearts no deeper than phrases borrowed from religion, or founded upon no firmer principles? and is our language so poor that we cannot find other terms to express them? Are *envy, pride, avarice, and ambition* such ill nomenclators, that they cannot furnish appellations for their owners? Will not *heydukes, and mamalukes, mandarins, and patshaws*, or any other words formed at pleasure, serve to distinguish those who are in the ministry, from others, who would be in it if they could? What, for instance, is easier than to vary the form of speech, and instead of the word church make it a question in politics whether the monument be in danger? Because religion was nearest at hand to furnish a few convenient phrases, is our invention so barren, we can find no other? Suppose, for argument sake, that the Tories favored Margarita, the Whigs Mrs. Tofts, and the trimmers Valentinii;¹ would not *Margaritians,*

Toftians, and Valentinians be very tolerable marks of distinction? The *Prasini* and *Veniti*, two most virulent factions in Italy, began (if I remember right) by a distinction of colors in ribbons; and we might contend with as good a grace about the dignity of the *blue* and the *green*, which would serve as properly to divide the court, the parliament, and the kingdom between them as any terms of art whatsoever borrowed from religion. And therefore I think there is little force in this objection against Christianity, or prospect of so great an advantage, as is proposed in the abolishing of it.

It is again objected, as a very absurd, ridiculous custom, that a set of men should be suffered, much less employed and hired, to bawl one day in seven against the lawfulness of those methods most in use, toward the pursuit of greatness, riches, and pleasure, which are the constant practice of all men alive on the other six. But this objection is, I think, a little unworthy of so refined an age as ours. Let us argue this matter calmly: I appeal to the breast of any polite free-thinker, whether, in the pursuit of gratifying a predominant passion, he has not always felt a wonderful incitement, by reflecting it was a thing forbidden; and therefore we see, in order to cultivate this taste, the wisdom of the nation has taken special care that the ladies should be furnished with prohibited silks, and the men with prohibited wine. And indeed it were to be wished that some other prohibitions were promoted, in order to improve the pleasures of the town; which for want of such expedients begin already, as I am told, to flag and grow languid, giving way daily to cruel inroads from the spleen.²

It is likewise proposed as a great advantage to the public, that if we once discard the system of the gospel, all religion will of course be banished for ever; and consequently along with it those grievous prejudices of education, which under the names of *virtue, conscience, honor, justice*, and the like, are so apt to disturb the peace of human minds, and the notions whereof are so hard to be eradicated, by right reason or free-thinking, sometimes during the whole course of our lives.

Here first I observe, how difficult it is to get rid of a phrase which the world is once grown fond of, though the occasion that first produced it be entirely taken away. For several years past, if a man had but an ill-favored nose, the deep-thinkers of the age

¹ The spleen was supposed to be the seat of ill-humor and depression.

² Popular stage-favorites.

would some way or other contrive to impute the cause to the prejudice of his education. From this fountain were said to be derived all our foolish notions of justice, piety, love of our country; all our opinions of God or a future state, heaven, hell, and the like; and there might formerly, perhaps, have been some pretence for this charge. But so effectual care has been taken to remove those prejudices by an entire change in the methods of education, that (with honor I mention it to our polite innovators) the young gentlemen who are now on the scene seem to have not the least tincture of those infusions, or string of those weeds; and by consequence, the reason for abolishing nominal Christianity upon that pretext is wholly ceased.

For the rest, it may perhaps admit a controversy whether the banishing of all notions of religion whatsoever would be convenient for the vulgar. Not that I am in the least of opinion with those who hold religion to have been the invention of politicians to keep the lower part of the world in awe, by the fear of invisible powers; unless mankind were then very different to what it is now: for I look upon the mass or body of our people here in England to be as free-thinkers, that is to say, as staunch unbelievers, as any of the highest rank. But I conceive some scattered notions about a superior power to be of singular use for the common people, as furnishing excellent materials to keep children quiet when they grow peevish, and providing topics of amusement in a tedious winter-night.

Lastly, it is proposed as a singular advantage, that the abolishing of Christianity will very much contribute to the uniting of Protestants, by enlarging the terms of communion, so as to take in all sorts of dissenters, who are now shut out of the pale upon account of a few ceremonies, which all sides confess to be things indifferent; that this alone will effectually answer the great ends of a scheme for comprehension, by opening a large noble gate, at which all bodies may enter; whereas the chaffering with dissenters, and dodging about this or the other ceremony, is but like opening a few wickets, and leaving them at jar, by which no more than one can get in at a time, and that not without stooping, and sideling, and squeezing his body.

To all this I answer, that there is one darling inclination of mankind which usually affects to be a retainer to religion, though she be neither its parent, its godmother, or its friend; I mean the spirit of opposition, that

lived long before Christianity, and can easily subsist without it. Let us, for instance, examine wherein the opposition of sectaries among us consists; we shall find Christianity to have no share in it at all. Does the gospel anywhere prescribe a starched, squeezed countenance, a stiff formal gait, a singularity of manners and habit, or any affected modes of speech, different from the reasonable part of mankind? Yet, if Christianity did not lend its name to stand in the gap, and to employ or divert these humors, they must of necessity be spent in contraventions to the laws of the land, and disturbance of the public peace. There is a portion of enthusiasm¹ assigned to every nation, which, if it has not proper objects to work on, will burst out and set all in a flame. If the quiet of a state can be bought by only flinging men a few ceremonies to devour, it is a purchase no wise man would refuse. Let the mastiffs amuse themselves about a sheep's skin stuffed with hay, provided it will keep them from worrying the flock. The institution of convents abroad seems in one point a strain of great wisdom; there being few irregularities in human passions that may not have recourse to vent themselves in some of those orders, which are so many retreats for the speculative, the melancholy, the proud, the silent, the politic, and the morose, to spend themselves, and evaporate the noxious particles; for each of whom we in this island are forced to provide a several sect of religion, to keep them quiet; and whenever Christianity shall be abolished, the legislature must find some other expedient to employ and entertain them. For what imports it how large a gate you open, if there will be always left a number, who place a pride and a merit in refusing to enter?

Having thus considered the most important objections against Christianity, and the chief advantages proposed by the abolishing thereof, I shall now, with equal deference and submission to wiser judgments, as before, proceed to mention a few inconveniences that may happen, if the gospel should be repealed, which perhaps the projectors may not have sufficiently considered.

And first, I am very sensible how much the gentlemen of wit and pleasure are apt to murmur, and be choked at the sight of so many daggled-tail parsons, who happen to fall in their way and offend their eyes; but, at the same time, these wise reformers do not consider what an advantage and felicity

¹ Fanaticism.

it is for great wits to be always provided with objects of scorn and contempt, in order to exercise and improve their talents, and divert their spleen from falling on each other or on themselves; especially when all this may be done without the least imaginable danger to their persons.

And to urge another argument of a parallel nature: if Christianity were once abolished, how could the free-thinkers, the strong reasoners, and the men of profound learning, be able to find another subject, so calculated in all points, whereon to display their abilities? what wonderful productions of wit should we be deprived of from those whose genius, by continual practice, has been wholly turned upon railery and invectives against religion, and would therefore never be able to shine or distinguish themselves upon any other subject? we are daily complaining of the great decline of wit among us, and would we take away the greatest, perhaps the only, topic we have left? Who would ever have suspected Asgil for a wit, or Toland for a philosopher, if the inexhaustible stock of Christianity had not been at hand to provide them with materials? what other subject, through all art or nature, could have produced Tindal for a profound author, or furnished him with readers? it is the wise choice of the subject that alone adorns and distinguishes the writer. For had a hundred such pens as these been employed on the side of religion, they would have immediately sunk into silence and oblivion.

Nor do I think it wholly groundless, or my fears altogether imaginary, that the abolishing Christianity may perhaps bring the church into danger, or at least put the senate to the trouble of another securing vote. I desire I may not be mistaken; I am far from presuming to affirm or think that the church is in danger at present, or as things now stand; but we know not how soon it may be so, when the Christian religion is repealed. As plausible as this project seems, there may be a dangerous design lurking under it. Nothing can be more notorious than that the atheists, deists, socinians, anti-trinitarians, and other sub-divisions of free-thinkers, are persons of little zeal for the present ecclesiastical establishment; their declared opinion is for repealing the sacramental test; they are very indifferent with regard to ceremonies, nor do they hold the *jus divinum* of episcopacy; therefore this may be intended as one politic step toward altering

ing the constitution of the church established, and setting up presbytery in the stead, which I leave to be further considered by those at the helm.

In the last place, I think nothing can be more plain than that, by this expedient, we shall run into the evil we chiefly pretend to avoid, and that the abolishment of the Christian religion will be the readiest course we can take to introduce popery. And I am the more inclined to this opinion, because we know it has been the constant practice of the Jesuits to send over emissaries with instructions to personate themselves members of the several prevailing sects among us. So it is recorded that they have at sundry times appeared in the disguise of presbyterians, anabaptists, independents, and quakers, according as any of these were most in credit; so, since the fashion has been taken up of exploding religion, the popish missionaries have not been wanting to mix with the free-thinkers; among whom Toland, the great oracle of the anti-christians, is an Irish priest, the son of an Irish priest, and the most learned and ingenious author of a book called "The Rights of the Christian Church,"¹ was in a proper juncture reconciled to the Romish faith, whose true son, as appears by a hundred passages in his treatise, he still continues. Perhaps I could add some others to the number, but the fact is beyond dispute, and the reasoning they proceed by is right; for, supposing Christianity to be extinguished, the people will never be at ease till they find out some other method of worship, which will as infallibly produce superstition, as superstition will end in popery.

And therefore if, notwithstanding all I have said, it still be thought necessary to have a bill brought in for repealing Christianity, I would humbly offer an amendment, that instead of the word Christianity, may be put religion in general, which, I conceive, will much better answer all the good ends proposed by the projectors of it. For, as long as we leave in being a God and his providence, with all the necessary consequences which curious and inquisitive men will be apt to draw from such premises, we do not strike at the root of the evil, though we should ever so effectually annihilate the present scheme of the gospel: for of what use is freedom of thought, if it will not produce freedom of action? which is the sole end, how remote soever in appearance, of all objections against

¹ The deist, Tindal, who as a young man had become for a time a Roman Catholic.

Christianity; and therefore the free-thinkers consider it as a sort of edifice, wherein all the parts have such a mutual dependence on each other, that if you happen to pull out one single nail, the whole fabric must fall to the ground. This was happily expressed by him, who had heard of a text brought for proof of the Trinity, which in an ancient manuscript was differently read; he thereupon immediately took the hint, and by a sudden deduction of a long *sortes* most logically concluded — “Why, if it be as you say, I may safely whore and drink on, and defy the parson.” From which, and many the like instances easy to be produced, I think nothing can be more manifest than that the quarrel is not against any particular points of hard digestion in the Christian system, but against religion in general; which, by laying restraints on human nature, is supposed the great enemy to the freedom of thought and action.

Upon the whole, if it shall still be thought for the benefit of church and state that Christianity be abolished, I conceive, however, it may be more convenient to defer the execution to a time of peace, and not venture, in this conjuncture, to disoblige our allies, who, as it falls out, are all Christians, and many of them, by the prejudices of their education, so bigoted as to place a sort of pride in the appellation. If, upon being rejected by them, we are to trust to an alliance with the Turk, we shall find ourselves much deceived: for, as he is too remote, and generally engaged in war with the Persian Emperor, so his people would be more scandalized at our infidelity than our Christian neighbors. For the Turks are not only strict observers of religious worship, but, what is worse, believe a God; which is more than is required of us, even while we preserve the name of Christians.

To conclude: whatever some may think of the great advantages to trade by this favorite scheme, I do very much apprehend that, in six months time after the act is passed for the extirpation of the gospel, the Bank and East India stock may fall at least one per cent. And since that is fifty times more than ever the wisdom of our age thought fit to venture for the preservation of Christianity, there is no reason we should be at so great a loss, merely for the sake of destroying it.

A MODEST PROPOSAL

FOR PREVENTING THE CHILDREN OF POOR PEOPLE IN IRELAND FROM BEING A BURDEN TO THEIR PARENTS OR COUNTRY, AND FOR MAKING THEM BENEFICIAL TO THE PUBLIC.

1729.

For a century and more Ireland had been held by the English virtually as a conquered province; and the economic tyranny of English rule, and the rapacious greed of English landlords, had reduced the great mass of its population to the most terrible and abject poverty. Though of English ancestry, Swift was by birth an Irishman, and as a resident of Ireland he gave himself whole-heartedly to the Irish cause. His great heart burned with indignation at the ragged famine and sordid misery which he saw all about him, “which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.” And so with grim irony he proposes his remedy, which he elaborates with relentless ingenuity. This new table delicacy will be “very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.”

It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town¹ or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants: who as they grow up either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country to fight for the pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom a very great additional grievance; and, therefore, whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth, would deserve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars; it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them

as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of our projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, a child just dropped from its dam may be supported by her milk for a solar year, with little other nourishment; at most not above the value of 2s., which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner as instead of being a charge upon their parents or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall on the contrary contribute to the feeding, and partly to the clothing, of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us! sacrificing the poor innocent babes I doubt more to avoid the expense than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about 200,000 couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract 30,000 couple who are able to maintain their own children (although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom); but this being granted, there will remain 170,000 breeders. I again subtract 50,000 for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remains 120,000 children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, how this number shall be reared and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land; they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing, till they arrive at six years old, except where they are of towardly parts; although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time, they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers; as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan,

who protested to me that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old is no saleable commodity; and even when they come to this age they will not yield above 3*l.* or 3*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* at most on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration that of the 120,000 children already computed, 20,000 may be reserved for breed, whereof only one-fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine; and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining 100,000 may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune through the kingdom; always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, will increase to 28 pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentifully in March, and a little before and after: for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician,

that fish being a prolific diet, there are more children born in Roman Catholic countries about nine months after Lent than at any other season; therefore, reckoning a year after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of popish infants is at least three to one in this kingdom: and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, laborers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about 2s. per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give 10s. for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he has only some particular friend or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among the tenants; the mother will have 8s. net profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which artificially dressed will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our city of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased in discoursing on this matter to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every country being now ready to starve for want of work and service; and these to be disposed of by their parents, if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me, from frequent experience that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our school-boys by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable; and to fatten them would

not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submission be a loss to the public, because they soon would become breeders themselves: and besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice (although indeed very unjustly), as a little bordering upon cruelty; which, I confess, has always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well so ever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanazar, a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London about twenty years ago: and in conversation told my friend, that in his country when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality as a prime dainty; and that in his time the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court, in joints from the gibbet, at 400 crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who without one single groat to their fortunes cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at playhouse and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for, the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed, and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken to ease the nation of so grievous an encumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known that they are every day dying and rotting by cold and famine, and filth and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young laborers, they are now in as hopeful a condition; they cannot get work, and consequently pine away for want of nourishment, to a degree that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labor, they have not strength to perform it; and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of papists, with whom we are yearly overrun, being the principal breeders of the nation as well as our most dangerous enemies; and who stay at home on purpose to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate.

Secondly, The poor tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to distress and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintenance of 100,000 children, from two years old and upward, cannot be computed at less than 10s. a-piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased £50,000 per annum, beside the profit of a new dish introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among ourselves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, The constant breeders, beside the gain of 8s. sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns; where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection, and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards or enforced by laws and penalties. It would increase the care and tenderness of mothers toward their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the public, to their annual profit instead of expense. We should see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives during the time of their pregnancy as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, their sows when they are ready to

farrow; nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a mis-carriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barreled beef, the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our table; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well-grown, fat, yearling child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a lord mayor's feast or any other public entertainment. But this and many others I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that 1000 families in this city would be constant customers for infants' flesh, beside others who might have it at merry-meetings, particularly at weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about 20,000 carcasses; and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining 80,000.

I can think of no one objection that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and it was indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual kingdom of Ireland and for no other that ever was, is, or I think ever can be upon earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: of taxing our absentees at 5s. a pound: of using neither clothes nor household furniture except what is of our own growth and manufacture: of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence, and temperance: of learning to love our country, in the want of which we differ even from LAPLANDERS and the inhabitants of TOPINAMBOO: of quitting our animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken: of being a little cautious not to sell our country and conscience for nothing: of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy toward their tenants: lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shopkeepers; who, if a resolution could now be

taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, till he has at least some glimpse of hope that there will be ever some hearty and sincere attempt to put them in practice.

But as to myself, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success I fortunately fell upon this proposal; which, as it is wholly new, so it has something solid and real, of no expense and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging ENGLAND. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, the flesh being of too tender a consistence to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion as to reject any offer proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, as things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for

100,000 useless mouths and backs. And secondly, there being a round million of creatures in human figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock would leave them in debt 2,000,000*l.* sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession to the bulk of farmers, cottagers, and laborers, with the wives and children who are beggars in effect; I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold as to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes as they have since gone through by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor clothes to cover them from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of entailing the like or greater miseries upon their breed for ever.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavoring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the public good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719) AND RICHARD STEELE (1672-1729)

Addison and Steele were born within a few weeks of one another in the spring of 1672 — Addison in a quiet English village where his father was the clergyman, Steele in the city of Dublin. They were school-fellows at the Charterhouse School in London, and undergraduates together at Oxford. Life-long friends, their names are inseparably linked in the annals of English literature. In temperament, however, they were different enough. Addison was the quiet, reserved scholar, shy and with sometimes an almost forbidding coldness; Steele, with his Irish birth, was gay, warm-hearted, extravagant, an eager participant in all social amusements.

They both drifted to London, where they were caught up into the literary-political life of the capital as staunch supporters of the Whig party. Addison's poem the *Campaign*, in celebration of the battle of Blenheim won by the great Whig general, Marlborough, led ultimately to his appointment as Secretary of State. Steele edited the *Gazette*, official publication of the government, and in 1715 was made Sir Richard Steele. Besides his work as an essayist, Steele was one of the most successful comic dramatists of his day, his best known play being the *Conscious Lovers* (1722), an outstanding example of "sentimental comedy." Addison was the author of *Cato* (1713), a tragedy in blank verse which, though seriously deficient in dramatic interest, won great notoriety because of its political import, and continued to be read because of the fine rhetoric of its speeches.

The most memorable work of Addison and Steele was their joint editorship of the *Tatler* (1709-1710) and the *Spectator* (1711-1712, 1714). The earlier periodical, which appeared three times a week, was begun by Steele alone; but Addison contributed about forty of the papers. For its suc-

cessor, which was issued every day but Sunday, Addison wrote about half the numbers. Occasional papers were contributed by other writers. It was the avowed purpose of the *Spectator* to popularize morality and culture, to bring "philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses." Avoiding carefully any bias of party politics, it portrays with kindly humor and criticizes with sound good sense the manners and customs of eighteenth-century life, all the vanities and petty foibles of the staid city merchant, of the fine lady and "pretty fellow" of the West End. Sometimes the "speculation" of the day is a wise but entertaining discourse on morals and philosophy, sometimes a piece of literary criticism. The prevailing manner is that proper to the familiar essay — witty, whimsical, conversational. Of the two essayists, Addison is the more perfect literary artist. In the often-quoted words of Dr. Johnson, he was master of "an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious." The charm of his essays is the personal charm of their author. It is as though one were able to draw up a coffee-house chair and listen to the quiet conversation of a gracious, kindly, cultivated gentleman as his wit and fancy and shrewd observation play over the variegated surface of every-day life.

The dozen essays here reprinted represent fairly well the varied subjects of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, except that the editors have not included any of the familiar group of papers which deal with Sir Roger de Coverley, with which the readers of this book will probably be already well acquainted.

A good biography of Addison is that of Courthope. Austin Dobson has written an excellent short biography of Steele. Both are in the English Men of Letters series. A convenient reprint of the *Spectator* is included in Everyman's Library (Dutton).

THE TATLER

ON DUELLING¹

The Tatler, No. 25.

Tuesday, June 7, 1709

Quicquid agunt homines —
— nostri est farrago libelli.

JUVENAL, *Sat.* I, 85, 86

Whate'er men do, or say, or think, or dream,
Our motley paper seizes for its theme.

White's Chocolate House, June 6

A letter from a young lady, written in the most passionate terms, wherein she laments the misfortune of a gentleman, her lover, who was lately wounded in a duel, has turned my thoughts to that subject and inclined me to examine into the causes which precipitate men into so fatal a folly. And as it has been proposed to treat of subjects of gallantry in the article from hence, and no one point in nature is more proper to be considered by the company who frequent this place than that of duels, it is worth our consideration to examine into this chimerical, groundless humor and to lay every other thought aside, until we have stripped it of all its false pretenses to credit and reputation amongst men.

But I must confess, when I consider what I am going about, and run over in my imagination all the endless crowd of men of honor who will be offended at such a discourse, I am undertaking, methinks, a work worthy an invulnerable hero in romance, rather than a private gentleman with a single rapier: but as I am pretty well acquainted, by great opportunities, with the nature of man, and know of a truth that all men fight against

their will, the danger vanishes and resolution rises upon this subject. For this reason, I shall talk very freely on a custom which all men wish exploded, though no man has courage enough to resist it.

But there is one unintelligible word, which I fear will extremely perplex my dissertation, and I confess to you I find very hard to explain, which is the term "satisfaction." An honest country gentleman had the misfortune to fall into company with two or three modern men of honor, where he happened to be very ill-treated; and one of the company, being conscious of his offense, sends a note to him in the morning and tells him he was ready to give him satisfaction. "This is fine doing," says the plain fellow: "last night he sent me away cursedly out of humor, and this morning he fancies it would be a satisfaction to be run through the body."

As the matter at present stands, it is not to do handsome actions denominates a man of honor; it is enough if he dares to defend ill ones. Thus you often see a common sharper in competition with a gentleman of the first rank; though all mankind is convinced that a fighting gamester is only a pickpocket with the courage of a highwayman. One cannot with any patience reflect on the unaccountable jumble of persons and things in this town and nation; which occasions very frequently that a brave man falls by a hand below that of a common hangman, and yet his executioner escapes the clutches of the hangman for doing it. I shall, therefore, hereafter consider how the bravest men in other ages and nations have behaved

¹ Written by Steele.

themselves upon such incidents as we decide by combat; and show, from their practice, that this resentment neither has its foundation from true reason or solid fame; but is an imposture, made of cowardice, falsehood, and want of understanding. For this work, a good history of quarrels would be very edifying to the public; and I apply myself to the town for particulars and circumstances within their knowledge, which may serve to embellish the dissertation with proper cuts. Most of the quarrels I have ever known have proceeded from some valiant coxcomb's persisting in the wrong, to defend some prevailing folly, and preserve himself from the ingenuousness of owning a mistake.

By this means it is called "giving a man satisfaction," to urge your offense against him with your sword; which puts me in mind of Peter's order to the keeper in *The Tale of a Tub*:¹ "if you neglect to do all this, damn you and your generation for ever: and so we bid you heartily farewell." If the contradiction in the very terms of one of our challenges were as well explained and turned into downright English, would it not run after this manner?

"Sir:

"Your extraordinary behavior last night, and the liberty you were pleased to take with me, makes me this morning give you this, to tell you, because you are an ill-bred puppy, I will meet you in Hyde Park an hour hence; and because you want both breeding and humanity, I desire you would come with a pistol in your hand, on horseback, and endeavor to shoot me through the head, to teach you more manners. If you fail of doing me this pleasure, I shall say you are a rascal on every post in town: and so, sir, if you will not injure me more, I shall never forgive what you have done already. Pray, sir, do not fail of getting everything ready; and you will infinitely oblige, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant, etc."

THE TRUMPET CLUB²

The Tatler, No. 132.

Saturday, Feb. II, 1710

Habeo senectuti magnam gratiam, quae mihi sermonis aviditatem auxit, potionis et cibi sustulit.

TULLIUS, DE SENECTUTE

I am much beholden to old age, which has increased my eagerness for conversation in proportion as it has lessened my appetites of hunger and thirst.

After having applied my mind with more than ordinary attention to my studies, it is my usual custom to relax and unbend it in

the conversation of such as are rather easy than shining companions. This I find particularly necessary for me before I retire to rest, in order to draw my slumbers upon me by degrees, and fall asleep insensibly. This is the particular use I make of a set of heavy, honest men, with whom I have passed many hours with much indolence, though not with great pleasure. Their conversation is a kind of preparative for sleep: it takes the mind down from its abstractions, leads it into the familiar traces of thought, and lulls it into that state of tranquility which is the condition of a thinking man, when he is but half awake. After this, my reader will not be surprised to hear the account which I am about to give of a club of my own contemporaries among whom I pass two or three hours every evening. This I look upon as taking my first nap before I go to bed. The truth of it is, I should think myself unjust to posterity, as well as to the society at the Trumpet, of which I am a member, did not I in some part of my writings give an account of the persons among whom I have passed almost a sixth part of my time for these last forty years. Our club consisted originally of fifteen; but, partly by the severity of the law in arbitrary times, and partly by the natural effects of old age, we are at present reduced to a third part of that number; in which, however, we have this consolation, that the best company is said to consist of five persons. I must confess, besides the aforementioned benefit which I meet with in the conversation of this select society, I am not the less pleased with the company, in that I find myself the greatest wit among them, and am heard as their oracle in all points of learning and difficulty.

Sir Jeoffery Notch, who is the oldest of the club, has been in possession of the right-hand chair time out of mind, and is the only man among us that has the liberty of stirring the fire. This, our foreman, is a gentleman of an ancient family, that came to a great estate some years before he had discretion, and run it out in hounds, horses, and cock-fighting; for which reason he looks upon himself as an honest, worthy gentleman, who has had misfortunes in the world, and calls every thriving man a pitiful upstart.

Major Matchlock is the next senior, who served in the last civil wars and has all the battles by heart. He does not think any action in Europe worth talking of since the fight of Marston Moor; and every night tells us of his having been knocked off his horse at

1 By Swift.

2 Written by Steele.

the rising of the London apprentices; for which he is in great esteem among us.

Honest old Dick Reptile is the third of our society. He is a good-natured, indolent man who speaks little himself, but laughs at our jokes; and brings his young nephew along with him, a youth of eighteen years old, to show him good company, and give him a taste of the world. This young fellow sits generally silent; but whenever he opens his mouth or laughs at any thing that passes, he is constantly told by his uncle, after a jocular manner, "Ay, ay, Jack, you young men think us fools; but we old men know you are."

The greatest wit of our company, next to myself, is a bencher of the neighboring Inn,¹ who in his youth frequented the ordinaries² about Charing Cross, and pretends to have been intimate with Jack Ogle. He has about ten distiches of *Hudibras* without book, and never leaves the club till he has applied them all. If any modern wit be mentioned, or any town frolic spoken of, he shakes his head at the dullness of the present age, and tells us a story of Jack Ogle.

For my own part, I am esteemed among them, because they see I am something respected by others; though at the same time I understand by their behavior, that I am considered by them as a man of a great deal of learning, but no knowledge of the world; insomuch, that the Major sometimes, in the height of his military pride, calls me the philosopher; and Sir Jeoffery, no longer ago than last night, upon a dispute what day of the month it was then in Holland, pulled his pipe out of his mouth and cried, "What does the scholar say to it?"

Our club meets precisely at six o'clock in the evening; but I did not come last night until half an hour after seven, by which means I escaped the battle of Naseby, which the Major usually begins at about three-quarters after six: I found also that my good friend the Bencher had already spent three of his distiches; and only waited an opportunity to hear a sermon spoken of, that he might introduce the couplet where "a stick" rhymes to "ecclesiastic."³ At my entrance into the room, they were naming a red petticoat and a cloak, by which I found that the Bencher had been diverting them with a story of Jack Ogle.

I had no sooner taken my seat, but Sir

Jeoffery, to show his good will toward me, gave me a pipe of his own tobacco, and stirred up the fire. I look upon it as a point of morality to be obliged by those who endeavor to oblige me; and therefore, in requital for his kindness, and to set the conversation a-going, I took the best occasion I could to put him upon telling us the story of old Gantlett, which he always does with very particular concern. He traced up his descent on both sides for several generations, describing his diet and manner of life, with his several battles, and particularly that in which he fell. This Gantlett was a game cock, upon whose head the knight, in his youth, had won five hundred pounds, and lost two thousand. This naturally set the Major upon the account of Edgehill fight, and ended in a duel of Jack Ogle's.

Old Reptile was extremely attentive to all that was said, though it was the same he had heard every night for these twenty years, and, upon all occasions, winked upon his nephew to mind what passed.

This may suffice to give the world a taste of our innocent conversation, which we spun out until about ten of the clock, when my maid came with a lantern to light me home. I could not but reflect with myself, as I was going out, upon the talkative humor of old men, and the little figure which that part of life makes in one who cannot employ his natural propensity in discourses which would make him venerable. I must own, it makes me very melancholy in company, when I hear a young man begin a story; and have often observed that one of a quarter of an hour long in a man of five-and-twenty gathers circumstances every time he tells it, until it grows into a long Canterbury tale of two hours by that time he is threescore.

The only way of avoiding such a trifling and frivolous old age is to lay up in our way to it such stores of knowledge and observation as may make us useful and agreeable in our declining years. The mind of man in a long life will become a magazine of wisdom or folly, and will consequently discharge itself in something impertinent or improving. For which reason, as there is nothing more ridiculous than an old trifling story-teller, so there is nothing more venerable than one who has turned his experience to the entertainment and advantage of mankind.

In short, we who are in the last stage of life, and are apt to indulge ourselves in talk, ought to consider if what we speak be worth being heard, and endeavor to make our dis-

¹ i.e., one of the inns of court. ² restaurants.

³ And pulpit, drum ecclesiastic.

Was beat with fist instead of a stick.

Hudibras, Pt. I, l. 1, 11 (by Samuel Butler).

course like that of Nestor, which Homer compares to the flowing of honey for its sweetness.

I am afraid I shall be thought guilty of this excess I am speaking of, when I cannot conclude without observing that Milton certainly thought of this passage in Homer when, in his description of an eloquent spirit, he says,

"His tongue dropped manna."

CHARACTER OF THE UPHOLSTERER¹

The Teller, No. 155.

Thursday, April 6, 1710

Aliena negotia curat,
Excussus propriis.

HORACE, *Sat.* II, ii, 19

When he had lost all business of his own,
He ran in quest of news through all the town.

From my own Apartment, April 5

There lived some years since, within my neighborhood, a very grave person, an upholsterer, who seemed a man of more than ordinary application to business. He was a very early riser, and was often abroad two or three hours before any of his neighbors. He had a particular carefulness in the knitting of his brows, and a kind of impatience in all his motions, that plainly discovered he was always intent on matters of importance. Upon my inquiry into his life and conversation, I found him to be the greatest news-monger in our quarter: that he rose before day to read the *Postman*; and that he would take two or three turns to the other end of the town before his neighbors were up, to see if there were any Dutch mails come in. He had a wife and several children; but was much more inquisitive to know what passed in Poland than in his own family, and was in greater pain and anxiety of mind for King Augustus's welfare than that of his nearest relations. He looked extremely thin in a dearth of news, and never enjoyed himself in a westerly wind. This indefatigable kind of life was the ruin of his shop; for about the time that his favorite prince left the crown of Poland, he broke and disappeared.

This man and his affairs had been long out of my mind, until about three days ago, as I was walking in St. James's park, I heard somebody at a distance hemming after me; and who should it be but my old neighbor, the upholsterer? I saw he was reduced to extreme poverty, by certain shabby superfluities in his dress: for, notwithstanding that it was a very sultry day for the time of the year, he wore a loose greatcoat and a muff, with a long campaign wig out of curl, to

which he had added the ornament of a pair of black garters buckled under the knee.

Upon his coming up to me, I was going to inquire into his present circumstances; but was prevented by his asking me, with a whisper, "whether the last letters brought any accounts that one might rely upon from Bender?"

I told him, "None that I heard of," and asked him, "whether he had yet married his eldest daughter."

He told me, "No. But pray," says he, "tell me sincerely what are your thoughts of the King of Sweden?"² For though his wife and children were starving, I found his chief concern at present was for this great monarch. I told him, that I looked upon him as one of the first heroes of the age.

"But pray," says he, "do you think there is anything in the story of his wound?" And finding me surprised at the question, "Nay," says he, "I only propose it to you."

I answered that I thought there was no reason to doubt of it.

"But why in the heel," says he, "more than any other part of the body?"

"Because," said I, "the bullet chanced to light there."

This extraordinary dialogue was no sooner ended, but he began to launch out into a long dissertation upon the affairs of the North; and after having spent some time on them, he told me he was in a great perplexity how to reconcile the *Supplement* with the *English Post*, and had been just now examining what the other papers say upon the same subject. "The *Daily Courant*," says he, "has these words: 'We have advices from very good hands that a certain prince has some matters of great importance under consideration.' This is very mysterious; but the *Post-boy* leaves us more in the dark; for he tells us 'That there are private intimations of measures taken by a certain prince, which time will bring to light.' Now the *Postman*," says he, "who uses to be very clear, refers to the same news in these words: 'The late conduct of a certain prince affords great matter of speculation.' This certain prince," says the upholsterer, "whom they are all so cautious of naming, I take to be —." Upon which, though there was nobody near us, he whispered something in my ear, which I did not hear, or think worth my while to make him repeat.

¹ A place in Russia, occupied by the Swedes under Charles XII (1709).
² Charles XII.

¹ Written by Addison.

We were now got to the upper end of the Mall, where were three or four very odd fellows sitting together upon the bench. These I found were all of them politicians, who used to sun themselves in that place every day about dinner time. Observing them to be curiosities in their kind, and my friend's acquaintance, I sat down among them.

The chief politician of the bench was a great asserter of paradoxes. He told us, with a seeming concern, that by some news he had lately read from Muscovy, it appeared to him that there was a storm gathering in the Black Sea which might in time do hurt to the naval forces of this nation. To this he added that, for his part, he could not wish to see the Turk driven out of Europe, which he believed could not but be prejudicial to our woollen manufacture. He then told us that he looked upon those extraordinary revolutions which had lately happened in those parts of the world to have risen chiefly from two persons who were not much talked of; "and those," says he "are Prince Menzikoff and the Duchess of Mirandola." He backed his assertions with so many broken hints, and such a show of depth and wisdom, that we gave ourselves up to his opinions.

The discourse at length fell upon a point which seldom escapes a knot of true-born Englishmen, whether, in case of a religious war the Protestants would not be too strong for the Papists? This we unanimously determined on the Protestant side. One who sat on my right hand, and, as I found by his discourse, had been in the West Indies, assured us, that it would be a very easy matter for the Protestants to beat the Pope at sea; and added that whenever such a war does break out, it must turn to the good of the Leeward Islands. Upon this, one who sat at the end of the bench, and, as I afterwards found, was the geographer of the company, said that in case the Papists should drive the Protestants from these parts of Europe, when the worst came to the worst, it would be impossible to beat them out of Norway and Greenland, provided the northern crowns hold together, and the czar of Muscovy stand neuter. He further told us, for our comfort, that there were vast tracts of lands about the pole, inhabited neither by Protestants nor Papists, and of greater extent than all the Roman Catholic dominions in Europe.

When we had fully discussed this point, my friend, the upholsterer, began to exert himself upon the present negotiations of peace;

in which he deposed princes, settled the bounds of kingdoms, and balanced the power of Europe, with great justice and impartiality. I at length took my leave of the company, and was going away, but had not gone thirty yards, before the upholsterer hemmed again after me. Upon his advancing toward me with a whisper, I expected to hear some secret piece of news, which he had not thought fit to communicate to the bench; but instead of that, he desired me in my ear to lend him half-a-crown. In compassion to so needy a statesman, and to dissipate the confusion I found he was in, I told him, if he pleased, I would give him five shillings, to receive five pounds of him when the Great Turk was driven out of Constantinople; which he very readily accepted, but not before he had laid down to me the impossibility of such an event, as the affairs of Europe now stand.

This paper I design for the particular benefit of those worthy citizens who live more in a coffee house than in their shops, and whose thoughts are so taken up with the affairs of the allies, that they forget their customers.

CHARACTER OF SIR TIMOTHY TITLE¹.

The Teller, No. 165.

Saturday, April 29, 1710.

From my own Apartment, April 28

It has always been my endeavor to distinguish between realities and appearances, and to separate true merit from the pretense to it. As it shall ever be my study to make discoveries of this nature in human life, and to settle the proper distinctions between the virtues and perfections of mankind and those false colors and resemblances of them that shine alike in the eyes of the vulgar, so I shall be more particularly careful to search into the various merits and pretenses of the learned world. This is the more necessary, because there seems to be a general combination among the pedants to extol one another's labors, and cry up one another's parts; while men of sense, either through that modesty which is natural to them, or the scorn they have for such trifling commendations, enjoy their stock of knowledge, like a hidden treasure, with satisfaction and silence. Pedantry indeed, in learning, is like hypocrisy in religion, a form of knowledge without the power of it; that attracts the eyes of the common people; breaks out in noise and

¹ Written by Addison.

show; and finds its reward, not from any inward pleasure that attends it, but from the praises and approbations which it receives from men.

Of this shallow species there is not a more importunate, empty, and conceited animal than that which is generally known by the name of a Critic. This, in the common acceptance of the word, is one that, without entering into the sense and soul of an author, has a few general rules, which, like mechanical instruments, he applies to the works of every writer; and as they quadrate with them, pronounces the author perfect or defective. He is master of a certain set of words, as Unity, Style, Fire, Phlegm, Easy, Natural, Turn, Sentiment, and the like; which he varies, compounds, divides, and throws together, in every part of his discourse, without any thought or meaning. The marks you may know him by are an elevated eye and a dogmatical brow, a positive voice and a contempt for everything that comes out, whether he has read it or not. He dwells altogether in generals. He praises or dispraises in the lump. He shakes his head very frequently at the pedantry of universities, and bursts into laughter when you mention an author that is not known at Will's.¹ He hath formed his judgment upon Homer, Horace, and Virgil, not from their own works, but from those of Rapin and Bossu.² He knows his own strength so well, that he never dares praise any thing in which he has not a French author for his voucher.

With these extraordinary talents and accomplishments, Sir Timothy Tittle puts men in vogue, or condemns them to obscurity, and sits as judge of life and death upon every author that appears in public. It is impossible to represent the pangs, agonies, and convulsions which Sir Timothy expresses in every feature of his face, and muscle of his body, upon the reading a bad poet.

About a week ago, I was engaged, at a friend's house of mine, in an agreeable conversation with his wife and daughters, when, in the height of our mirth, Sir Timothy, who makes love to my friend's eldest daughter, came in amongst us, puffing and blowing as if he had been very much out of breath. He immediately called for a chair, and desired leave to sit down without any further ceremony. I asked him, where he had been? whether he was out of order? He only replied, that he was quite spent, and fell a

cursing in soliloquy. I could hear him cry, "A wicked rogue — an execrable wretch — was there ever such a monster!" The young ladies upon this began to be affrighted, and asked, whether anyone had hurt him? He answered nothing, but still talked to himself. "To lay the first scene," says he, "in St. James's Park, and the last in Northamptonshire!"

"Is that all?" said I. "Then I suppose you have been at the rehearsal of a play this morning."

"Been!" says he; "I have been at Northampton, in the park, in a lady's bed-chamber, in a dining-room, everywhere; the rogue has led me such a dance —"

Though I could scarce forbear laughing at his discourse, I told him I was glad it was no worse, and that he was only metaphorically weary.

"In short, sir," says he, "the author has not observed a single unity in his whole play; the scene shifts in every dialogue; the villain has hurried me up and down at such a rate that I am tired off my legs."

I could not but observe with some pleasure, that the young lady whom he made love to conceived a very just aversion towards him, upon seeing him so very passionate in trifles. And as she had that natural sense which makes her a better judge than a thousand critics, she began to rally him upon this foolish humor. "For my part," says she, "I never knew a play take that was written up to your rules, as you call them."

"How, Madam!" says he. "Is that your opinion? I am sure you have a better taste."

"It is a pretty kind of magic," says she, "the poets have, to transport an audience from place to place without the help of a coach and horses; I could travel round the world at such a rate. It is such an entertainment as an enchantress finds when she fancies herself in a wood, or upon a mountain, at a feast, or a solemnity; though at the same time she has never stirred out of her cottage."

"Your simile, Madam," says Sir Timothy, "is by no means just."

"Pray," says she, "let my similes pass without a criticism. I must confess," continued she (for I found she was resolved to exasperate him), "I laughed very heartily at the last new comedy which you found so much fault with."

"But, Madam," says he, "you ought not to have laughed; and I defy anyone to show me a single rule that you could laugh by."

¹ The famous coffee-house.

² French literary critics of the seventeenth century.

"Ought not to laugh!" says she; "pray who should hinder me?"

"Madam," says he, "there are such people in the world as Rapin, Dacier, and several others, that ought to have spoiled your mirth."

"I have heard," says the young lady, "that your great critics are always very bad poets: I fancy there is as much difference between the works of the one and the other, as there is between the carriage of a dancing-master and a gentleman. I must confess," continued she, "I would not be troubled with so fine a judgment as yours is; for I find you feel more vexation in a bad comedy, than I do in a deep tragedy."

"Madam," says Sir Timothy, "that is not my fault; they should learn the art of writing."

"For my part," says the young lady, "I should think the greatest art in your writers of comedies is to please."

"To please!" says Sir Timothy; and immediately fell a-laughing.

"Truly," says she, "that is my opinion." Upon this he composed his countenance, looked upon his watch, and took his leave.

I hear that Sir Timothy has not been at my friend's house since this notable conference, to the great satisfaction of the young lady, who by this means has got rid of a very impertinent fop.

I must confess, I could not but observe with a great deal of surprise how this gentleman, by his ill-nature, folly, and affectation, had made himself capable of suffering so many imaginary pains, and looking with such a senseless severity upon the common diversions of life.

EARLY RISING ¹

The Tatler, No. 263. Thursday, December 14, 1710

Minima contentos nocte Britannos.

JUVENAL, *Sat.* II, 161

Britons, contented with the shortest night.

From my own Apartment, December 13

An old friend of mine being lately come to town, I went to see him on Tuesday last, about eight o'clock in the evening, with a design to sit with him an hour or two, and talk over old stories; but upon inquiry after him, I found he was gone to bed. The next morning, as soon as I was up and dressed, and had despatched a little business, I came again to my friend's house, about eleven o'clock, with a design to renew my visit; but

upon asking for him, his servant told me he was just sat down to dinner. In short, I found that my old-fashioned friend religiously adhered to the example of his forefathers and observed the same hours that had been kept in the family ever since the Conquest.

It is very plain that the night was much longer formerly in this island than it is at present. By the night, I mean that portion of time which nature has thrown into darkness, and which the wisdom of mankind had formerly dedicated to rest and silence. This used to begin at eight o'clock in the evening, and conclude at six in the morning. The curfew, or eight o'clock bell, was the signal throughout the nation for putting out their candles and going to bed.

Our grandmothers, though they were wont to sit up the last in the family, were all of them fast asleep at the same hours that their daughters are busy at crimp and basset. Modern statesmen are concerting schemes, and engaged in the depth of politics, at the time when their forefathers were laid down quietly to rest, and had nothing in their heads but dreams. As we have thus thrown business and pleasure into the hours of rest, and, by that means, made the natural night but half as long as it should be, we are forced to piece it out with a great part of the morning; so that near two-thirds of the nation lie fast asleep for several hours in broad daylight. This irregularity is grown so very fashionable at present, that there is scarce a lady of quality in Great Britain that ever saw the sun rise. And, if the humor increases in proportion to what it has done of late years, it is not impossible but our children may hear the bellman going about the streets a nine o'clock in the morning, and the watch making their rounds until eleven. This unaccountable disposition in mankind to continue awake in the night, and sleep in the sunshine, has made me inquire whether the same change of inclination has happened to any other animals? For this reason, I desired a friend of mine in the country to let me know whether the lark rises as early as he did formerly; and whether the cock begins to crow at his usual hour. My friend answered me, that his poultry are as regular as ever, and that all the birds and beasts of his neighborhood keep the same hours that they have observed in the memory of man; and the same which, in all probability, they have kept for these five thousand years.

If you would see the innovations that have been made among us in this particular, you

¹ Written by Steele.

may only look into the hours of colleges, where they still dine at eleven and sup at six, which were doubtless the hours of the whole nation at the time when those places were founded. But, at present, the courts of justice are scarce opened in Westminster Hall at the time when William Rufus used to go to dinner in it. All business is driven forward. The landmarks of our fathers, if I may so call them, are removed and planted further up into the day; insomuch, that I am afraid our clergy will be obliged, if they expect full congregations, not to look any more upon ten o'clock in the morning as a canonical hour. In my own memory, the dinner has crept by degrees from twelve o'clock to three, and where it will fix nobody knows.

I have sometimes thought to draw up a memorial in the behalf of Supper against Dinner, setting forth that the said Dinner has made several encroachments upon the said Supper, and entered very far upon his frontiers; that he has banished him out of several families, and in all has driven him from his headquarters, and forced him to make his retreat into the hours of midnight; and, in short, that he is now in danger of being entirely confounded and lost in a breakfast. Those who have read Lucian, and seen the complaints of the letter T against S, upon account of many injuries and usurpations of the same nature, will not, I believe, think such a memorial forced and unnatural. If dinner has been thus postponed, or, if you please, kept back from time to time, you may be sure that it has been in compliance with the other business of the day, and that supper has still observed a proportionable distance. There is a venerable proverb, which we have all of us heard in our infancy, of "putting the children to bed, and laying the goose to the fire." This was one of the jocular sayings of our forefathers, but may be properly used in the literal sense at present. Who would not wonder at this perverted relish of those who are reckoned the most polite part of mankind, that prefer sea-coals and candles to the sun, and exchange so many cheerful morning hours for the pleasures of midnight revels and debauches? If a man was only to consult his health, he would choose to live his whole time, if possible, in daylight; and to retire out of the world into silence and sleep, while the raw damps and unwholesome vapors fly abroad without a sun to disperse, moderate, or control them. For my own part, I value an hour in the morning as much as common liber-

tines do an hour at midnight. When I find myself awakened into being, and perceive my life renewed within me, and at the same time see the whole face of nature recovered out of the dark uncomfortable state in which it lay for several hours, my heart overflows with such secret sentiments of joy and gratitude, as are a kind of implicit praise to the great Author of nature. The mind, in these early seasons of the day, is so refreshed in all its faculties, and borne up with such new supplies of animal spirits, that she finds herself in a state of youth, especially when she is entertained with the breath of flowers, the melody of birds, the dews that hang upon the plants, and all those other sweets of nature that are peculiar to the morning.

It is impossible for a man to have this relish of being, this exquisite taste of life, who does not come into the world before it is in all its noise and hurry; who loses the rising of the sun, the still hours of the day, and, immediately upon his first getting up, plunges himself into the ordinary cares or follies of the world. I shall conclude this paper with Milton's inimitable description of Adam's awakening his Eve in Paradise, which indeed would have been a place as little delightful as a barren heath or desert to those who slept in it. The fondness of the posture in which Adam is represented, and the softness of his whisper are passages in this divine poem that are above all commendation and rather to be admired than praised.

Now Morn, her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam waked, so custom'd; for his sleep
Was airy light from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapors bland, which th' only
sound

Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough; so much the more
His wonder was to find unawaken'd Eve,
With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,
As through unquiet rest. He on his side
Leaning half-raised, with looks of cordial love,
Hung over her, enamored, and beheld
Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces. Then, with voice
Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whispered thus:

"Awake,
My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
Heaven's last, best gift, my ever-new delight,
Awake; the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy
reed,

How Nature paints her colors, how the bee
Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweet."

Such whispering waked her, but with startled
eye

On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spake.

"O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
My glory, my perfection, glad I see
Thy face, and morn returned —"

THE SPECTATOR

THE USES OF THE SPECTATOR ¹

The Spectator, No. 10.

Monday, March 12, 1711

Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
Remigis subigit, si brachia forte remisit,
Atque illum praeceps prono rapit alevus amni.

VIRGIL, *Georg.* I, 201

So the boat's brawny crew the current stem,
And slow advancing, struggle with the stream;
But if they slack their hands, or cease to strive,
Then down the flood with headlong haste they drive.

DRYDEN

It is with much satisfaction that I hear this great city inquiring day by day after these my papers, and receiving my morning lectures with a becoming seriousness and attention. My publisher tells me that there are already three thousand of them distributed every day: so that if I allow twenty readers to every paper, which I look upon as a modest computation, I may reckon about threescore thousand disciples in London and Westminster, who I hope will take care to distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd of their ignorant and unattentive brethren. Since I have raised to myself so great an audience, I shall spare no pains to make their instruction agreeable, and their diversion useful. For which reasons I shall endeavor to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality, that my readers may, if possible, both ways find their account in the speculation of the day. And to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermitting starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen. The mind that lies fallow but a single day sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture. It was said of Socrates, that he brought philosophy down from heaven, to inhabit among men: and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses.

¹ Written by Addison.

I would, therefore, in a very particular manner recommend these my speculations to all well-regulated families, that set apart an hour in every morning for tea and bread and butter; and would earnestly advise them for their good to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a part of the tea equipage.

Sir Francis Bacon observes that a well-written book, compared with its rivals and antagonists, is like Moses's serpent, that immediately swallowed up and devoured those of the Egyptians. I shall not be so vain as to think that where the *Spectator* appears the other public prints will vanish; but shall leave it to my reader's consideration, whether it is not much better to be let into the knowledge of one's self, than to hear what passes in Muscovy or Poland; and to amuse ourselves with such writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion, and prejudice, than such as naturally conduce to inflame hatreds and make enmities irreconcilable?

In the next place, I would recommend this paper to the daily perusal of those gentlemen whom I cannot but consider as my good brothers and allies; I mean the fraternity of spectators who live in the world without having anything to do in it, and either by the affluence of their fortunes, or laziness of their dispositions, have no other business with the rest of mankind but to look upon them. Under this class of men are comprehended all contemplative tradesmen, titular physicians, fellows of the Royal Society, Templars that are not given to be contentious, and statesmen that are out of business; in short, everyone that considers the world as a theatre, and desires to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it.

There is another set of men that I must likewise lay a claim to, whom I have lately called the blanks of society, as being altogether unfurnished with ideas till the business and conversation of the day has supplied them. I have often considered these poor souls with an eye of great commiseration, when I have heard them asking the first man they have met with, whether there was any news stirring? and by that means gathering together materials for thinking. These needy persons do not know what to talk of till about twelve o'clock in the morning; for by that time they are pretty good judges of the weather, know which way the wind sits, and whether the Dutch mail be come in. As they lie at the mercy of the first man they meet, and are grave or impertinent all the

day long, according to the notions which they have imbibed in the morning, I would earnestly entreat them not to stir out of their chambers till they have read this paper, and do promise them that I will daily instill into them such sound and wholesome sentiments, as shall have a good effect on their conversation for the ensuing twelve hours.

But there are none to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world. I have often thought there has not been sufficient pains taken in finding out proper employments and diversions for the fair ones. Their amusements seem contrived for them, rather as they are women, than as they are reasonable creatures; and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's, or a toy-shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweetmeats. This, I say, is the state of ordinary women; though I know there are multitudes of those of a more elevated life and conversation, that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of the mind to the ornaments of dress, and inspire a kind of awe and respect, as well as love, into their male beholders. I hope to increase the number of these by publishing this daily paper, which I shall always endeavor to make an innocent, if not an improving, entertainment, and by that means at least divert the minds of my female readers from greater trifles. At the same time, as I would fain give some finishing touches to those which are already the most beautiful pieces in human nature, I shall endeavor to point out all those imperfections that are the blemishes, as well as those virtues which are the embellishments, of the sex. In the meanwhile I hope these my gentle readers, who have so much time on their hands, will not grudge throwing away a quarter of an hour in a day on this paper, since they may do it without any hindrance to business.

I know several of my friends and well-wishers are in great pain for me, lest I should not be able to keep up the spirit of a paper which I oblige myself to furnish every day; but to make them easy in this particular, I will promise them faithfully to give it over

as soon as I grow dull. This I know will be matter of great raillery to the small wits; who will frequently put me in mind of my promise, desire me to keep my word, assure me that it is high time to give over, with many other little pleasantries of the like nature, which men of a little smart genius cannot forbear throwing out against their best friends, when they have such a handle given them of being witty. But let them remember that I do hereby enter my caveat against this piece of raillery.

SIGNIOR NICOLINI AND THE LIONS¹

The Spectator, No. 13.

Thursday, March 15, 1711

Dic mihi, si fias tu leo, qualis eris?

MARTIAL, XII, 93

Were you a lion, how would you behave?

There is nothing that of late years has afforded matter of greater amusement to the town than Signior Nicolini's² combat with a lion in the Haymarket, which has been very often exhibited to the general satisfaction of most of the nobility and gentry in the kingdom of Great Britain. Upon the first rumor of this intended combat, it was confidently affirmed, and is still believed by many in both galleries, that there would be a tame lion sent from the Tower every opera night, in order to be killed by Hydaspes; this report, though altogether groundless, so universally prevailed in the upper regions of the play-house, that some of the most refined politicians in those parts of the audience gave it out in whisper that the lion was a cousin-german of the tiger who made his appearance in King William's days, and that the stage would be supplied with lions at the public expense, during the whole session. Many likewise were the conjectures of the treatment which this lion was to meet with from the hands of Signior Nicolini; some supposed that he was to subdue him in *recitativo*, as Orpheus used to serve the wild beasts in his time, and afterwards to knock him on the head; some fancied that the lion would not pretend to lay his paws upon the hero, by reason of the received opinion that a lion will not hurt a virgin: several, who pretended to have seen the opera in Italy, had informed their friends that the lion was to act a part in High-Dutch, and roar twice or thrice to a thorough bass before he fell at the feet of Hydaspes. To clear up a matter that was

¹ Written by Addison.

² A popular performer in Italian opera, who first came to London in 1708. The vogue of Italian opera was a frequent subject of satire.

so variously reported, I have made it my business to examine whether this pretended lion is really the savage he appears to be, or only a counterfeit.

But before I communicate my discoveries, I must acquaint the reader that upon my walking behind the scenes last winter, as I was thinking on something else, I accidentally jostled against a monstrous animal that extremely startled me and, upon my nearer survey of it, appeared to be a lion rampant. The lion, seeing me very much surprised, told me, in a gentle voice, that I might come by him if I pleased: "For (says he) I do not intend to hurt anybody." I thanked him very kindly, and passed by him. And in a little time after saw him leap upon the stage, and act his part with very great applause. It has been observed by several that the lion has changed his manner of acting twice or thrice since his first appearance; which will not seem strange when I acquaint my reader that the lion has been changed upon the audience three several times. The first lion was a candle-snuffer, who, being a fellow of a testy choleric temper, overdid his part, and would not suffer himself to be killed so easily as he ought to have done; besides, it was observed of him that he grew more surly every time he came out of the lion; and having dropped some words in ordinary conversation, as if he had not fought his best, and that he suffered himself to be thrown upon his back in the scuffle, and that he would wrestle with Mr. Nicolini for what he pleased, out of his lion's skin, it was thought proper to discard him: and it is verily believed to this day that had he been brought upon the stage another time, he would certainly have done mischief. Besides, it was objected against the first lion, that he reared himself so high upon his hinder paws, and walked in so erect a posture, that he looked more like an old man than a lion.

The second lion was a tailor by trade, who belonged to the playhouse, and had the character of a mild and peaceable man in his profession. If the former was too furious, this was too sheepish, for his part; insomuch that, after a short modest walk upon the stage, he would fall at the first touch of Hydaspes, without grappling with him, and giving him an opportunity of showing his variety of Italian trips. It is said indeed, that he once gave him a rip in his flesh-color doublet, but this was only to make work for himself, in his private character of a tailor. I must not omit that it was this second lion who treated

me with so much humanity behind the scenes.

The acting lion at present is, as I am informed, a country gentleman, who does it for his diversion, but desires his name may be concealed. He says very handsomely in his own excuse, that he does not act for gain, that he indulges an innocent pleasure in it, and that it is better to pass away an evening in this manner than in gaming and drinking: but at the same time says, with a very agreeable raillery upon himself, that if his name should be known, the ill-natured world might call him, "the ass in the lion's skin." This gentleman's temper is made out of such a happy mixture of the mild and the choleric, that he outdoes both his predecessors, and has drawn together greater audiences than have been known in the memory of man.

I must not conclude my narrative, without taking notice of a groundless report that has been raised to a gentleman's disadvantage, of whom I must declare myself an admirer; namely, that Signior Nicolini and the lion have been seen sitting peaceably by one another, and smoking a pipe together, behind the scenes; by which their common enemies would insinuate that it is but a sham combat which they represent upon the stage: but upon inquiry I find that if any such correspondence has passed between them, it was not till the combat was over, when the lion was to be looked upon as dead, according to the received rules of the drama. Besides, this is what is practiced every day in Westminster Hall, where nothing is more usual than to see a couple of lawyers, who have been tearing each other to pieces in the court, embracing one another as soon as they are out of it.

I would not be thought, in any part of this relation, to reflect upon Signior Nicolini, who in acting this part only complies with the wretched taste of his audience; he knows very well that the lion has many more admirers than himself; as they say, of the famous equestrian statue on the Pont-Neuf at Paris, that more people go to see the horse than the king who sits upon it. On the contrary, it gives me a just indignation to see a person whose action gives new majesty to kings, resolution to heroes, and softness to lovers, thus sinking from the greatness of his behavior, and degraded into the character of the London Prentice. I have often wished that our tragedians would copy after this great master in action. Could they make the same use of their arms and legs, and inform their faces with as significant looks and

passions, how glorious would an English tragedy appear with that action, which is capable of giving a dignity to the forced thoughts, cold conceits, and unnatural expressions of an Italian opera! In the meantime, I have related this combat of the lion to show what are at present the reigning entertainments of the politer part of Great Britain.

Audiences have often been reproached by writers for the coarseness of their taste; but our present grievance does not seem to be the want of a good taste, but of common sense.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY ¹

The Spectator, No. 26.

Friday, March 30, 1711

Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres, O beate Sesti.

Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam:
Jam te premet nox, fabulaeque manes,

Et domus exilis Plutonia —

HORACE, *Odes*, I, IV, 13

With equal foot, rich friend, impartial fate
Knocks at the cottage, and the palace gate;
Life's span forbids thee to extend thy cares,
And stretch thy hopes beyond thy years;
Night soon will seize, and you must quickly go
To story'd ghosts, and Pluto's house below.

CREECH

When I am in a serious humor, I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey; where the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable. I yesterday passed a whole afternoon in the churchyard, the cloisters, and the church, amusing myself with the tombstones and inscriptions that I met with in those several regions of the dead. Most of them recorded nothing else of the buried person, but that he was born upon one day, and died upon another: the whole history of his life being comprehended in those two circumstances that are common to all mankind. I could not but look upon these registers of existence, whether of brass or marble, as a kind of satire upon the departed persons; who had left no other memorial of them but that they were born, and that they died. They put me in mind of several persons mentioned in the battles of heroic poems, who have sounding names given them, for no other reason but that they may be killed, and are celebrated for nothing but being knocked on the head.

Γλαῦκόν τε Μέδοντά τε Θερσίλοχόν τε,

HOMER.

¹ Written by Addison.

Glaucumque, Medontaque, Thersilochumque.

VIRGIL.

Glaucus, and Medon, and Thersilochus.

The life of these men is finely described in Holy Writ by "the path of an arrow," which is immediately closed up and lost.

Upon my going into the church, I entertained myself with the digging of a grave; and saw in every shovelful of it that was thrown up the fragment of a bone or skull intermixed with a kind of fresh mouldering earth that some time or other had a place in the composition of an human body. Upon this, I began to consider with myself, what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of that ancient cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness, and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.

After having thus surveyed this great magazine of mortality, as it were, in the lump, I examined it more particularly by the accounts which I found on several of the monuments which are raised in every quarter of that ancient fabric. Some of them were covered with such extravagant epitaphs that, if it were possible for the dead person to be acquainted with them, he would blush at the praises which his friends have bestowed upon him. There are others so excessively modest that they deliver the character of the person departed in Greek or Hebrew, and by that means are not understood once in a twelve-month. In the poetical quarter, I found there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets. I observed, indeed, that the present war had filled the church with many of these uninhabited monuments, which had been erected to the memory of persons whose bodies were perhaps buried in the plains of Blenheim, or in the bosom of the ocean.

I could not but be very much delighted with several modern epitaphs, which are written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought, and therefore do honor to the living as well as to the dead. As a foreigner is very apt to conceive an idea of the ignorance or politeness of a nation from the turn of their public monuments and inscriptions, they should be submitted to the perusal of men of learning and genius before

THE VISION OF MIRZAH ¹*The Spectator*, No. 159.

Saturday, September 1, 1711

— Omnem, quae nunc obducta tuenti
 Mortales hebetat visus tibi, et humida circum
 Caligat, nubem eripiam —

VIRGIL, *Aen.* II, 604

The cloud, which intercepting the clear light,
 Hangs o'er the eyes, and blunts thy mortal sight,
 I will remove —

they are put in execution. Sir Cloudesley Shovel's monument has very often given me great offense: instead of the brave rough English admiral, which was the distinguishing character of that plain, gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state. The inscription is answerable to the monument; for instead of celebrating the many remarkable actions he had performed in the service of his country, it acquaints us only with the manner of his death, in which it was impossible for him to reap any honor. The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of genius, show an infinitely greater taste of antiquity and politeness in their buildings and works of this nature, than what we meet with in those of our own country. The monuments of their admirals, which have been erected at the public expense, represent them like themselves; and are adorned with rostral crowns and naval ornaments, with beautiful festoons of seaweed, shells, and coral.

But to return to our subject. I have left the repository of our English kings for the contemplation of another day, when I shall find my mind disposed for so serious an amusement. I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds, and gloomy imaginations; but for my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy; and can therefore take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes, with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those objects which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

When I was at Grand Cairo, I picked up several oriental manuscripts, which I have still by me. Among others I met with one, entitled *The Visions of Mirzah*, which I have read over with great pleasure. I intend to give it to the public when I have no other entertainment for them; and shall begin with the first vision, which I have translated, word for word, as follows:

"On the fifth day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer. As I was here airing myself on the tops of the mountains, I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life; and passing from one thought to another, 'Surely,' said I, 'man is but a shadow, and life a dream.' Whilst I was thus musing, I cast my eyes towards the summit of a rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one in the habit of a shepherd, with a little musical instrument in his hand. As I looked upon him, he applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it. The sound of it was exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from anything I had ever heard. They put me in mind of those heavenly airs that are played to the departed souls of good men upon their first arrival in paradise, to wear out the impressions of the last agonies, and qualify them for the pleasures of that happy place. My heart melted away in secret raptures.

"I had been often told that the rock before me was the haunt of a genius; and that several had been entertained with music who had passed by it, but never heard that the musician had before made himself visible. When he had raised my thoughts, by those transporting airs which he played, to taste the pleasures of his conversation, as I looked upon him like one astonished, he beckoned to me, and by the waving of his hand directed me to approach the place where he sat. I drew near with that reverence which is due to

¹ Written by Addison.

a superior nature; and as my heart was entirely subdued by the captivating strains I had heard, I fell down at his feet and wept. The genius smiled upon me with a look of compassion and affability that familiarized him to my imagination, and at once dispelled all the fears and apprehensions with which I approached him. He lifted me from the ground, and taking me by the hand, 'Mirzah,' said he, 'I have heard thee in thy soliloquies; 10 follow me.'

"He then led me to the highest pinnacle of the rock, and placing me on the top of it, 'Cast thy eyes eastward,' said he, 'and tell me what thou seest.' 'I see,' said I, 'a huge 15 valley and a prodigious tide of water rolling through it.' 'The valley that thou seest,' said he, 'is the vale of misery, and the tide of water that thou seest is part of the great tide of eternity.' 'What is the reason,' said I, 'that the tide I see rises out of a thick mist at one end, and again loses itself in a thick mist at the other?' 'What thou seest,' said he, 'is that portion of eternity which is called time, measured out by the sun, and reaching 25 from the beginning of the world to its consummation. Examine now,' said he, 'this sea that is bounded with darkness at both ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it.' 'I see a bridge,' said I, 'standing in the midst 30 of the tide.' 'The bridge thou seest,' said he, 'is human life; consider it attentively.' Upon a more leisurely survey of it, I found that it consisted of threescore and ten entire arches, with several broken arches, which, 35 added to those that were entire, made up the number about an hundred. As I was counting the arches, the genius told me that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches; but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition I now beheld it. 'But tell me further,' said he, 'what thou discoverest on it.' 'I see multitudes of people passing over it,' said I, 'and a black cloud hanging on each end of it.' 45 As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge, into the great tide that flowed underneath it; and upon further examination, perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell through them into the tide and immediately disappeared. These hidden pitfalls were set very thick at the entrance of the bridge, 55 so that throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud, but many of them fell into them. They grew thinner towards the mid-

dle, but multiplied and lay closer together towards the end of the arches that were entire.

"There were indeed some persons, but their number was very small, that continued a kind of hobbling march on the broken arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a walk.

"I passed some time in the contemplation of this wonderful structure, and the great variety of objects which it presented. My heart was filled with a deep melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of mirth and jollity, and catching at every thing that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the heavens in a thoughtful posture, and in the midst of a speculation stumbled and fell out of sight. Multitudes were very busy in the pursuit of bubbles that glittered in their eyes and danced before them, but often when they thought themselves within the reach of them, their footing failed and down they sunk. In this confusion of objects, I observed some with scimitars in their hands, and others with urinals, who ran to and fro upon the bridge, thrusting several persons on trap-doors which did not seem to lie in their way, and which they might have escaped, had they not been thus forced upon them.

"The genius, seeing me indulge myself in this melancholy prospect, told me I had dwelt long enough upon it. 'Take thine eyes off the bridge,' said he, 'and tell me if thou yet seest any thing thou dost not comprehend.' Upon looking up, 'What mean,' said I, 'those great flights of birds that are perpetually hovering about the bridge, and settling upon it from time to time? I see vultures, harpies, ravens, cormorants; and among many other feathered creatures several little winged boys that perch in great numbers upon the middle arches.' 'These,' said the genius, 'are envy, avarice, superstition, despair, love, with the like cares and passions that infest human life.'

"I here fetched a deep sigh. 'Alas,' said I, 'man was made in vain! How is he given away to misery and mortality! tortured in life, and swallowed up in death!' The genius being moved with compassion towards me, bid me quit so uncomfortable a prospect: 'Look no more,' said he, 'on man in the first stage of his existence, in his setting out for eternity; but cast thine eye on that thick

i.e., doctors.

mist into which the tide bears the several generations of mortals that fall into it.' I directed my sight as I was ordered, and (whether or no the good genius strengthened it with any supernatural force, or dissipated part of the mist that was before too thick for the eye to penetrate) I saw the valley opening at the further end, and spreading forth into an immense ocean, that had a huge rock of adamant running through the midst of it, and dividing it into two equal parts. The clouds still rested on one half of it, insomuch that I could discover nothing in it; but the other appeared to me a vast ocean planted with innumerable islands, that were covered with fruits and flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining seas that ran among them. I could see persons dressed in glorious habits, with garlands upon their heads, passing among the trees, lying down by the sides of fountains, or resting on beds of flowers; and could hear a confused harmony of singing birds, falling waters, human voices, and musical instruments. Gladness grew in me upon the discovery of so delightful a scene. I wished for the wings of an eagle, that I might fly away to those happy seats; but the genius told me there was no passage to them, except through the gates of death that I saw opening every moment upon the bridge. 'The islands,' said he, 'that lie so fresh and green before thee, and with which the whole face of the ocean appears spotted as far as thou canst see, are more in number than the sands on the sea-shore; there are myriads of islands behind those which thou here discoverest, reaching further than thine eye or even thine imagination can extend itself. These are the mansions of good men after death, who, according to the degree and kinds of virtue in which they excelled, are distributed among these several islands, which abound with pleasures of different kinds and degrees, suitable to the relishes and perfections of those who are settled in them; every island is a paradise accommodated to its respective inhabitants. Are not these, O Mirzah, habitations worth contending for? Does life appear miserable, that gives thee opportunities of earning such a reward? Is death to be feared, that will convey thee to so happy an existence? Think not man was made in vain, who has such an eternity reserved for him.' I gazed with inexpressible pleasure on these happy islands. 'At length,' said I, 'show me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid under those dark clouds which cover the ocean on the other

side of the rock of adamant.' The genius making me no answer, I turned about to address myself to him a second time, but I found that he had left me; I then turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating, but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdat, with oxen, sheep, and camels grazing upon the sides of it." —

DISSECTION OF A BEAU'S HEAD¹

The Spectator, No. 275.

Tuesday, January 15, 1712

— tribus Anticyris caput insanabile.

HORACE, *Ars Poet.* 300

A head no hellebore can cure.

I was yesterday engaged in an assembly of virtuosos, where one of them produced many curious observations which he had lately made in the anatomy of an human body. Another of the company communicated to us several wonderful discoveries, which he had also made on the same subject, by the help of very fine glasses. This gave birth to a great variety of uncommon remarks, and furnished discourse for the remaining part of the day.

The different opinions which were started on this occasion presented to my imagination so many new ideas that, by mixing with those which were already there, they employed my fancy all the last night, and composed a very wild extravagant dream.

I was invited, methought, to the dissection of a beau's head, and of a coquette's heart, which were both of them laid on a table before us. An imaginary operator opened the first with a great deal of nicety, which, upon a cursory and superficial view, appeared like the head of another man; but, upon applying our glasses to it, we made a very odd discovery, namely, that what we looked upon as brains, were not such in reality, but an heap of strange materials wound up in that shape and texture, and packed together with wonderful art in the several cavities of the skull. For, as Homer tells us that the blood of the gods is not real blood, but only something like it; so we found that the brain of a beau is not real brain, but only something like it.

The pineal gland, which many of our modern philosophers suppose to be the seat of the soul, smelt very strong of essence and orange-flower water, and was encompassed with a kind of horny substance, cut into a

¹ Written by Addison.

thousand little faces or mirrors, which were imperceptible to the naked eye; insomuch that the soul, if there had been any here, must have been always taken up in contemplating her own beauties.

We observed a large antrum or cavity in the sinciput, that was filled with ribbons, lace, and embroidery, wrought together in a most curious piece of network, the parts of which were likewise imperceptible to the naked eye. Another of these antrums or cavities was stuffed with invisible billet-doux, love-letters, pricked dances, and other trumpery of the same nature. In another we found a kind of powder, which set the whole company a sneezing, and by the scent discovered itself to be right Spanish. The several other cells were stored with commodities of the same kind, of which it would be tedious to give the reader an exact inventory.

There was a large cavity on each side of the head, which I must not omit. That on the right side was filled with fictions, flatteries, and falsehoods, vows, promises, and protestations; that on the left with oaths and imprecations. There issued out a duct from each of these cells, which ran into the root of the tongue, where both joined together, and passed forward in one common duct to the tip of it. We discovered several little roads or canals running from the ear into the brain, and took particular care to trace them out through their several passages. One of them extended itself to a bundle of sonnets and little musical instruments. Others ended in several bladders which were filled either with wind or froth. But the large canal entered into a great cavity of the skull, from whence there went another canal into the tongue. This great cavity was filled with a kind of spongy substance, which the French anatomists call *galimatias*, and the English nonsense.

The skins of the forehead were extremely tough and thick, and, what very much surprised us, had not in them any single blood-vessel that we were able to discover, either with or without our glasses; from whence we concluded that the party when alive must have been entirely deprived of the faculty of blushing.

The *os cribriforme* was exceedingly stuffed, and in some places damaged with snuff. We could not but take notice in particular of that small muscle, which is not often discovered in dissections, and draws the nose upwards, when it expresses the contempt which the owner of it has, upon seeing anything he does

not like, or hearing anything he does not understand. I need not tell my learned reader, this is that muscle which performs the motion so often mentioned by the Latin poets, when they talk of a man's cocking his nose, or playing the rhinoceros.

We did not find anything very remarkable in the eye, saving only that the *musculi amatorii*, or as we may translate it into English, the ogling muscles, were very much worn and decayed with use; whereas on the contrary, the elevator, or the muscle which turns the eye toward heaven, did not appear to have been used at all.

I have only mentioned in this dissection such new discoveries as we were able to make, and have not taken any notice of those parts which are to be met with in common heads. As for the skull, the face, and indeed the whole outward shape and figure of the head, we could not discover any difference from what we observe in the heads of other men. We were informed, that the person to whom this head belonged, had passed for a man above five and thirty years; during which time he eat and drank like other people, dressed well, talked loud, laughed frequently, and on particular occasions had acquitted himself tolerably at a ball or an assembly; to which one of the company added, that a certain knot of ladies took him for a wit. He was cut off in the flower of his age by the blow of a paring-shovel, having been surprised by an eminent citizen, as he was tendering some civilities to his wife.

When we had thoroughly examined this head with all its apartments, and its several kinds of furniture, we put up the brain, such as it was, into its proper place, and laid it aside under a broad piece of scarlet cloth, in order to be prepared, and kept in a great repository of dissections; our operator telling us that the preparation would not be so difficult as that of another brain, for that he had observed several of the little pipes and tubes which ran through the brain were already filled with a kind of mercurial substance, which he looked upon to be true quicksilver.

He applied himself in the next place to the coquette's heart, which he likewise laid open with great dexterity. There occurred to us many particularities in this dissection; but, being unwilling to burden my reader's memory too much, I shall reserve this subject for the speculation of another day.

DISSECTION OF A COQUETTE'S HEART¹*The Spectator*, No. 281. Tuesday, January 22, 1712

Pectoribus inhians spirantia consult exta.

VIRGIL, *Aen.* IV, 64

Anxious the reeking entrails he consults.

Having already given an account of the dissection of a beau's head, with the several discoveries made on that occasion, I shall here, according to my promise, enter upon the dissection of a coquette's heart and communicate to the public such particularities as we observed in that curious piece of anatomy.

I should, perhaps, have waived this undertaking, had not I been put in mind of my promise by several of my unknown correspondents, who are very importunate with me to make an example of the coquette, as I have already done of the beau. It is, therefore, in compliance with the request of friends, that I have looked over the minutes of my former dream, in order to give the public an exact relation of it, which I shall enter upon without further preface.

Our operator, before he engaged in this visionary dissection, told us, that there was nothing in his art more difficult, than to lay open the heart of a coquette, by reason of the many labyrinths and recesses which are to be found in it, and which do not appear in the heart of any other animal.

He desired us first of all to observe the *pericardium*, or outward case of the heart, which we did very attentively; and, by the help of our glasses, discerned in it millions of little scars, which seemed to have been occasioned by the points of innumerable darts and arrows, that from time to time had glanced upon the outward coat; though we could not discover the smallest orifice, by which any of them had entered and pierced the inward substance.

Every smatterer in anatomy knows that this *pericardium*, or case of the heart, contains in it a thin reddish liquor, supposed to be bred from the vapors which exhale out of the heart, and being stopped here, are condensed into this watery substance. Upon examining this liquor, we found that it had in it all the qualities of that spirit which is made use of in the thermometer to show the change of weather.

Nor must I here omit an experiment one of the company assured us he himself had made with this liquor, which he found in great quantity about the heart of a coquette whom he had formerly dissected. He affirmed to us, that he had actually enclosed it in a small

tube made after the manner of a weather-glass; but that, instead of acquainting him with the variations of the atmosphere, it showed him the qualities of those persons who entered the room where it stood. He affirmed also, that it rose at the approach of a plume of feathers, an embroidered coat, or a pair of fringed gloves; and that it fell as soon as an ill-shaped periwig, a clumsy pair of shoes, or an unfashionable coat came into his house: nay, he proceeded so far as to assure us, that upon his laughing aloud when he stood by it, the liquor mounted very sensibly, and immediately sunk again upon his looking serious. In short, he told us that he knew very well by this invention whenever he had a man of sense or a coxcomb in his room.

Having cleared away the *pericardium*, or the case, and liquor above mentioned, we came to the heart itself. The outward surface of it was extremely slippery, and the *muscle*, or point, so very cold withal that, upon endeavoring to take hold of it, it glided through the fingers like a smooth piece of ice.

The fibres were turned and twisted in a more intricate and perplexed manner than they are usually found in other hearts; inso-much, that the whole heart was wound up together like a Gordian knot, and must have had very irregular and unequal motions, whilst it was employed in its vital function.

One thing we thought very observable, namely, that upon examining all the vessels which came into it or issued out of it, we could not discover any communication that it had with the tongue.

We could not but take notice, likewise, that several of those little nerves in the heart, which are affected by the sentiments of love, hatred, and other passions, did not descend to this before us from the brain, but from the muscles which lie about the eye.

Upon weighing the heart in my hand, I found it to be extremely light, and consequently very hollow; which I did not wonder at, when, upon looking into the inside of it, I saw multitudes of cells and cavities running one within another, as our historians describe the apartments of Rosamond's Bower. Several of these little hollows were stuffed with innumerable sorts of trifles, which I shall forbear giving any particular account of, and shall therefore only take notice of what lay first and uppermost, which, upon our unfolding it and applying our microscope to it, appeared to be a flame-colored hood.

We were informed that the lady of this heart, when living, received the addresses of

¹ Written by Addison.

several who made love to her, and did not only give each of them encouragement, but made everyone she conversed with believe that she regarded him with an eye of kindness; for which reason we expected to have seen the impression of multitudes of faces among the several plaits and foldings of the heart; but, to our great surprise, not a single print of this nature discovered itself, till we came into the very core and centre of it. We there observed a little figure, which, upon applying our glasses to it, appeared dressed in a very fantastic manner. The more I looked upon it, the more I thought I had seen the face before, but could not possibly recollect either the place or time; when at length one of the company, who had examined this figure more nicely than the rest, showed us plainly by the make of its face, and the several turns of its features, that the little idol that was thus lodged in the middle of the heart was the deceased beau, whose head I gave some account of in my last Tuesday's paper.

As soon as we had finished our dissection, we resolved to make an experiment of the heart, not being able to determine among ourselves the nature of its substance, which differed in so many particulars from that of the heart in other females. Accordingly we laid it into a pan of burning coals, when we observed in it a certain salamandrine quality, that made it capable of living in the midst of fire and flame, without being consumed, or so much as singed.

As we were admiring this strange phenomenon, and standing round the heart in a circle, it gave a most prodigious sigh, or rather crack, and dispersed all at once in smoke and vapor. This imaginary noise, which methought was louder than the burst of a cannon, produced such a violent shake in my brain, that it dissipated the fumes of sleep, and left me in an instant broad awake.

ON WASTE OF TIME¹

The Spectator, No. 317.

Tuesday, March 4, 1712

—Fruges consumere nati.

HORACE, *Ep.* I, II, 27

Born to drink and eat.

CREECH

Augustus, a few moments before his death, asked his friends who stood about him if they thought he had acted his part well; and upon receiving such an answer as was due to his extraordinary merit, "Let me then," says he, "go off the stage with your applause," using

¹ Written by Addison.

the expression with which the Roman actors made their exit at the conclusion of a dramatic piece. I could wish that men, while they are in health, would consider well the nature of the part they are engaged in, and what figure it will make in the minds of those they leave behind them; whether it was worth coming into the world for, whether it be suitable to a reasonable being; in short, whether it appears graceful in this life, or will turn to an advantage in the next. Let the sycophant, or buffoon, the satirist, or the good companion, consider with himself, when his body shall be laid in the grave, and his soul pass into another state of existence, how much it will redound to his praise to have it said of him that no man in England eat better, that he had an admirable talent at turning his friends into ridicule, that nobody outdid him at an ill-natured jest, or that he never went to bed before he had dispatched his third bottle. These are, however, very common funeral orations, and eulogiums on deceased persons who have acted among mankind with some figure and reputation.

But if we look into the bulk of our species, they are such as are not likely to be remembered a moment after their disappearance. They leave behind them no traces of their existence, but are forgotten as though they had never been. They are neither wanted by the poor, regretted by the rich, nor celebrated by the learned. They are neither missed in the commonwealth, nor lamented by private persons. Their actions are of no significancy to mankind, and might have been performed by creatures of much less dignity than those who are distinguished by the faculty of reason. An eminent French author speaks somewhere to the following purpose: I have often seen from my chamber window two noble creatures, both of them of an erect countenance, and endowed with reason. These two intellectual beings are employed, from morning to night, in rubbing two smooth stones one upon another; that is, as the vulgar phrase it, in polishing marble.

My friend, Sir Andrew Freeport, as we were sitting in the club last night, gave us an account of a sober citizen who died a few days since. This honest man, being of greater consequence in his own thoughts than in the eye of the world, had for some years past kept a journal of his life. Sir Andrew showed us one week of it. Since the occurrences set down in it mark out such a road of action as that I have been speaking of, I shall present my reader with a faithful copy of it; after

having first informed him that the deceased person had in his youth been bred to trade, but finding himself not so well turned for business, he had for several years last past lived altogether upon a moderate annuity.

MONDAY, Eight o'clock. I put on my clothes and walked into the parlor.

Nine o'clock, ditto. Tied my knee-strings, and washed my hands.

Hours ten, eleven, and twelve. Smoked three pipes of Virginia. Read the *Supplement* and *Daily Courant*. Things go ill in the north. Mr. Nisby's opinion thereupon.

One o'clock in the afternoon. Chid Ralph for mislaying my tobacco-box.

Two o'clock. Sat down to dinner. Mem. Too many plums and no suet.

From three to four. Took my afternoon's nap.

From four to six. Walked into the fields. Wind, S.S.E.

From six to ten. At the Club. Mr. Nisby's opinion about the peace.

Ten o'clock. Went to bed, slept sound.

TUESDAY, BEING HOLIDAY, Eight o'clock. Rose as usual.

Nine o'clock. Washed hands and face, shaved, put on my double soled shoes.

Ten, eleven, twelve. Took a walk to Islington.

One. Took a pot of Mother Cob's Mild.

Between two and three. Returned, dined on a knuckle of veal and bacon. Mem. Sprouts wanting.

Three. Nap as usual.

From four to six. Coffee-house. Read the news. A dish of twist. Grand Vizier strangled.

From six to ten. At the Club. Mr. Nisby's account of the Great Turk.

Ten. Dream of the Grand Vizier. Broken sleep.

WEDNESDAY, Eight o'clock. Tongue of my shoe-buckle broke. Hands, but not face.

Nine. Paid off the butcher's bill. Mem. To be allowed for the last leg of mutton.

Ten, eleven. At the coffee-house. More work in the north. Stranger in a black wig asked me how stocks went.

From twelve to one. Walked in the fields. Wind to the south.

From one to two. Smoked a pipe and a half.

Two. Dined as usual. Stomach good.

Three. Nap broke by the falling of a pewter-dish. Mem. Cook-maid in love, and grown careless.

From four to six. At the coffee-house. Advice from Smyrna, that the Grand Vizier was first of all strangled, and afterwards beheaded.

Six o'clock in the evening. Was half an hour in the club before anybody else came. Mr. Nisby of opinion that the Grand Vizier was not strangled the sixth instant.

Ten at night. Went to bed. Slept without waking till nine next morning.

THURSDAY, Nine o'clock. Stayed within till two o'clock for Sir Timothy, who did not bring me my annuity according to his promise.

Two in the afternoon. Sat down to dinner. Loss of appetite. Small beer sour. Beef overcorned.

Three. Could not take my nap.

Four and five. Gave Ralph a box on the ear. Turned off my cookmaid. Sent a message to Sir Timothy. Mem. I did not go to the club tonight. Went to bed at nine o'clock.

FRIDAY. Passed the morning in meditation upon Sir Timothy, who was with me a quarter before twelve.

Twelve o'clock. Bought a new head to my cane, and a tongue to my buckle. Drank a glass of purl to recover appetite.

Two and three. Dined, and slept well.

From four to six. Went to the coffee-house. Met Mr. Nisby there. Smoked several pipes. Mr. Nisby of opinion that laced coffee is bad for the head.

Six o'clock. At the club as steward. Sat late.

Twelve o'clock. Went to bed, dreamt that I drank small beer with the Grand Vizier.

SATURDAY. Waked at eleven, walked in the fields. Wind N.E.

Twelve. Caught in a shower.

One in the afternoon. Returned home, and dried myself.

Two. Mr. Nisby dined with me. First course marrow-bones. Second ox-cheek, with a bottle of Brook's and Hellier.

Three o'clock. Overslept myself.

Six. Went to the Club. Like to have fallen into a gutter. Grand Vizier certainly dead, etc.

I question not but the reader will be surprised to find the above-mentioned journalist taking so much care of a life that was filled with such inconsiderable actions and received so very small improvements; and yet, if we look into the behavior of many whom we daily converse with, we shall find that most of their hours are taken up in those three important articles of eating, drinking,

and sleeping. I do not suppose that a man loses his time, who is not engaged in public affairs, or in an illustrious course of action. On the contrary, I believe our hours may very often be more profitably laid out in such transactions as make no figure in the world than in such as are apt to draw upon them the attention of mankind. One may become wiser and better by several methods of employing one's self in secrecy and silence, and do what is laudable without noise or ostentation. I would, however, recommend

to every one of my readers the keeping a journal of their lives for one week, and setting down punctually their whole series of employments during that space of time. This kind of self-examination would give them a true state of themselves, and incline them to consider seriously what they are about. One day would rectify the omissions of another, and make a man weigh all those indifferent actions, which, though they are easily forgotten, must certainly be accounted for.

ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744)

Alexander Pope made himself the most distinguished poet of his generation in the face of grave difficulties. His father, a well-to-do linendraper in London, was a Roman Catholic; and the laws of eighteenth-century England placed upon Roman Catholics very serious disabilities. A Roman Catholic could not send his son to any of the great public schools or to the universities, nor even send him to be educated abroad. Pope's education was gained irregularly from private tutors and from his own voracious reading. He was deprived of the intellectual discipline and the wholesome human contacts of school and university. A severe illness at the age of twelve left him for the rest of his life a crippled invalid. He was about four feet, six inches tall, hump-backed, subject to frequent and terrible headaches. His religion made him ineligible for any government offices, such as those held by Addison and by Steele, and closed to him the learned professions; his physical deformity cut him off from many other activities. But luckily he could still be a poet; and Pope was born to be a poet. Before the age of fifteen he had written an epic poem, which he later destroyed. His *Pastorals*, published in 1708, won instant recognition by the exquisite music of their verse. Then in quick succession came the *Essay on Criticism* (1711), the *Rape of the Lock* (1712, revised 1714), and *Windsor Forest* (1713). Before he was twenty-five, Pope was clearly recognized as the greatest living poet. When in 1713 he proposed a translation of Homer's *Iliad*, it was regarded as a great national event. Every one of importance subscribed in advance for copies of the work, which appeared in six volumes, published at intervals between 1715 and 1720. Pope's profit from the translation was over £5000; and it must be remembered that the value of money was many times what it is to-day. His translation of the *Odyssey* (1725-26) yielded three or four thousand pounds more, and Pope was a rich man. He was the first English man of letters to make a fortune directly by his writings. In 1719, he bought the lease of a house with five acres of land on the banks of the Thames at Twickenham near London, where he lived for the rest of his life.

In his later years he devoted himself entirely to didactic and satiric poetry, the sort of writing for which his genius was best suited — the *Dunciad*, a mock-heroic epic directed against false pretenders to wit and learning (1728, revised in 1729, in 1742 with the addition of the fourth book, and in 1743 with Colley Cibber elevated to chief place among the "dunces"), the *Essay on Man* (1732-34), the *Moral Essays* (1731-35), the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1735).

Pope's genius won for him the warm friendship of the men and women of his day most distinguished by genius and rank; but his abnormal sensitiveness and his taste for intrigue involved him in many quarrels. Indeed his biography is largely a history of quarrels and intrigues, many of which can be forgiven only when one takes into account his crippled body and the circumstances of his education. But if he could be a bitter enemy, he could also be a generous friend.

During his lifetime, Pope was the "prince of English poets," a rank which he maintained, with some dissenting voices, till the close of the eighteenth century. With the nineteenth century his reputation suffered a great decline. Some even went so far as to declare that he was not a poet at all. We are able now to appraise more justly both his greatness and his limitations. He has not the power of Chaucer, or Shakespeare, or Browning to make men and women live and breathe before our eyes; nor does he like Milton create for us a new heaven and a new earth. His genius is critical rather than creative. It is fairer to compare him with such reflective poets as Wordsworth, or the Byron of *Childe Harold*, or the Tennyson of *In Memoriam*. If he has less spiritual elevation than Wordsworth and less fire than Byron, he is the superior of either in sound good sense, in flashing wit, and in playful fancy. Within the limits of the heroic couplet, a form which he brought to its supreme perfection, he has a marvelous range of metrical power — from the exquisite music of his more elevated poems to the easy colloquial flow of the *Moral Essays* and the satires. He is a master also of terse, epigrammatic diction; his sense for the right word and the

right phrase is so sure that he has given to the English language more familiar quotations than any other poet save Shakespeare. Whether or not we adjudge him a great poet, he is surely one of our great literary artists.

The standard edition of Pope's works is that of Elwin and Courthope in ten volumes, 1871-89. Volume V of this edition contains the fullest account of his life. Within smaller compass, the best edition is that of H. W. Boynton in the Cambridge Poets series (Houghton Mifflin Company), which includes the translations of Homer. A good short biography is that of Sir Leslie Stephen in the English Men of Letters series.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos;¹
Sed juvat, hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis.

Mart. Epig., XII, 84

First published 1712; revised edition 1714. Hazlitt called the *Rape of the Lock* "the triumph of insignificance." Its subject is insignificant enough. Among the circle of Pope's acquaintance a young nobleman in a spirit of frolic snipped off a lock of hair from the head of a young lady, and the escapade led to a quarrel between the families of the two young people. This trifling episode Pope has elaborated by bringing in all the "insignificances" of fashionable life—the lady's toilet-table, making coffee, playing cards. "The little is made great, and the great little." The whole is handled with the mock solemnity of a heroic epic. It was in the second edition that Pope added the delicious fancy of the sylphs and gnomes. If its substance is insignificant, the result is a supreme triumph of wit and fancy. The moral is pointed in lines 15-34 of Canto V, which insist on the virtues of "good sense" and "good humor." In the first three cantos the satire is directed against the lack of good sense, in the remainder of the poem against the lack of good humor. So that, magnificent trifle though it is, the *Rape of the Lock* is not without significance. If it makes little things great, is not that what we are continually doing in our social lives—magnifying the importance of dress and conventional manners, losing our tempers over trifling slights and annoyances. It is against such foibles as these that Pope levels the dart of his satire.

CANTO I

What dire offence from amorous causes
springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial
things,
I sing—This verse to *Caryll*,² muse! is due:
This, even Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise, 5
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.

Say what strange motive, Goddess! could
compel

¹ I should not have wished, Belinda, to violate your locks; but it is a pleasure to pay this tribute to your prayers.

² John Caryll, a close personal friend of Pope.

A well-bred Lord to assault a gentle Belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord? 10
In tasks so bold can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?

Sol thro' white curtains shot a tim'rous
ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day.
Now lapdogs give themselves the rousing
shake, 15

And sleepless lovers just at twelve awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knocked the
ground,
And the pressed watch returned a silver
sound.

Belinda still her downy pillow prest,
Her guardian Sylph prolonged the balmy
rest. 20

'Twas he had summoned to her silent bed
The morning-dream that hovered o'er her
head;

A youth more glittering than a Birthnight
Beau 1

(That even in slumber caused her cheek to
glow)

Seemed to her ear his winning lips to lay, 25
And thus in whispers said, or seemed to say:
"Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished
care

Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air!
If'er one vision touched thy infant thought,
Of all the nurse and all the priest have
taught — 30

Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by Angel-powers,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heavenly
flowers;

Hear and believe! thy own importance
know, 35

Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.
Some secret truths, from learned pride con-
cealed,

To maids alone and children are revealed:
What tho' no credit doubting Wits may give?
The fair and innocent shall still believe. 40
Know, then, unnumbered Spirits round thee
fly,

¹ i.e. a fine gentleman dressed for a celebration of the King's birthday.

The light militia of the lower sky.
These, tho' unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the Box, and hover round the
Ring.¹

Think what an equipage thou hast in air, 45
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once inclosed in woman's beauteous
mold;

Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly vehicles to these of air. 50
Think not, when woman's transient breath is
fled,

That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And, tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the
cards.

Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive, 55
And love of Ombre,² after death survive.
For when the Fair in all their pride expire,
To their first elements their souls retire.
The sprites of fiery termagants in flame
Mount up, and take a Salamander's name. 60
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a
Gnome

In search of mischief still on earth to roam.
The light coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair, 65
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.

"Know further yet: whoever fair and
chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph em-
braced;

For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they
please. 70

What guards the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treacherous friend, the daring
spark,

The glance by day, the whisper in the dark;
When kind occasion prompts their warm
desires, 75

When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,
Tho' Honor is the word with men below.

"Some nymphs there are, too conscious of
their face,

For life predestined to the Gnome's embrace.
These swell their prospects and exalt their
pride, 81

When offers are disdained, and love denied:
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While peers, and dukes, and all their sweep-
ing train,

And garters, stars, and coronets appear, 85
And in soft sounds, "Your Grace" salutes
their ear.

'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
Teach infant cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a Beau. 90

"Oft, when the world imagine women
stray,

The Sylphs thro' mystic mazes guide their
way;

Thro' all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.

What tender maid but must a victim fall 95
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks, what virgin could with-
stand,

If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from every part,
They shift the moving toyshop of their
heart; 100

Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots
sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches
drive.

This erring mortals levity may call;
Oh blind to truth! the Sylphs contrive it all.

"Of these am I, who thy protection claim.
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name. 106
Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend, 110
But Heaven reveals not what, or how or
where.

Warned by the Sylph, O pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!"

He said; when Shock, who thought she
slept too long, 115
Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his
tongue.

'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first opened on a billet-doux;
Wounds, charms, and ardors were no
sooner read,

But all the vision vanished from thy head. 120
And now, unveiled, the toilet stands dis-
played,

Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent
adores,

With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers.
A heavenly image in the glass appears; 125
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears.
Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.
Unnumbered treasures op at once, and here

1 A circular promenade in Hyde Park.
2 A game of cards.

The various offerings of the world appear; 130
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the Goddess with the glittering
spoil.

This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite, 135
Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the
white.

Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms; 139
The Fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy Sylphs surround their darling
care, 145

These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the
gown;

And Betty's¹ praised for labors not her own.

CANTO II

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs, and well-dressed youths around
her shone, 5

But every eye was fixed on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those: 10
Favors to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of
pride, 15
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to
hide;

If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.

This nymph, to the destruction of man-
kind,

Nourished two locks, which graceful hung
behind 20

In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth ivory neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray, 25
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,

¹ Belinda's maid, the "inferior priestess."

Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

Th' adventurous Baron the bright locks
admired;

He saw, he wished, and to the prize as-
pired. 30

Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask if fraud or force attained his ends.

For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had im-
plored 35

Propitious Heaven, and every Power adored,
But chiefly Love — to Love an altar built
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves; 40
With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three amorous sighs to raise the
fire.

Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent
eyes

Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The Powers gave ear, and granted half his
prayer, 45

The rest the winds dispersed in empty air.

But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating
tides;

While melting music steals upon the sky,
And softened sounds along the waters die: 50
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently
play,

Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.
All but the Sylph — with careful thoughts
oppress

Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons straight his denizens of air; 55
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:
Soft o'er the shrouds ærial whispers breathe
That seemed but zephyrs to the train be-
neath.

Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of
gold; 60

Transparent forms too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light,
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glittering textures of the filmy dew,
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies, 65
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While every beam new transient colors
flings,

Colors that change when'er they wave
their wings.

Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head was Ariel placed; 70
His purple pinions opening to the sun,

He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:

"Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief
give ear.

Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Dæmons,
hear!

Ye know the spheres and various tasks
assigned 75

By laws eternal to th' aërial kind.

Some in the fields of purest ether play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day:
Some guide the course of wandering orbs on
high,

Or roll the planets thro' the boundless sky:
Some, less refined, beneath the moon's pale
light 81

Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry
main, 85

Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
Others, on earth, o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions
guide:

Of these the chief the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British
Throne. 90

"Our humbler province is to tend the Fair,
Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious care;
To save the Powder from too rude a gale;
Nor let th' imprisoned Essences exhale;
To draw fresh colors from the vernal
flowers; 95
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in
showers

A brighter Wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes and inspire their airs;
Nay oft, in dreams invention we bestow,
To change a Flounce, or add a Furbelow. 100

"This day black omens threat the bright-
est Fair,

That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force or slight;
But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt
in night.

Whether the nymph shall break Diana's
law, 105

Or some frail China jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honor, or her new brocade,
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade,
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether Heaven has doomed that Shock¹
must fall. 110

Haste, then, ye Spirits! to your charge re-
pair:

The fluttering fan be Zephyretta's care;
The droops to thee, Brillante, we consign;

¹ Belinda's lap-dog.

And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her favorite Lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock. 116

"To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the petticoat;
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to
fail,

Tho' stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of
whale. 120

Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.

"Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the Fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his
sins: 125

Be stopped in vials, or transfixed with pins,
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedged whole ages in a bodkin's eye;
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogged he beats his silken wings in
vain, 130

Or alum styptics with contracting power
Shrink his thin essence like a rivelled flower:
Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow, 135
And tremble at the sea that froths below!"

He spoke; the spirits from the sails de-
scend;

Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;
Some thread the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear; 140
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate.

CANTO III

Close by those meads, for ever crowned with
flowers,

Where Thames with pride surveys his rising
towers

There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighboring Hampton takes
its name.¹

Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall fore-
doom 5

Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home;
Here, thou, great ANNA! whom three realms
obey,

Dost sometimes counsel take — and some-
times tea.

Hither the Heroes and the Nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court; 10
In various talk th' instructive hours they
past,

Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,

¹ Hampton Court, a royal palace near London.

And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At every word a reputation dies. ¹⁶
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that.*

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray; ²⁰
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine; ¹
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in
peace,

And the long labors of the toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites, ²⁵
Burns to encounter two adventurous knights,
At Ombre singly to decide their doom,
And swells her breast with conquests yet to
come.

Straight the three bands prepare in arms to
join,

Each band the number of the sacred Nine. ³⁰
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aerial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:
First Ariel perched upon a Matadore,²
Then each according to the rank they bore;
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient
race, ³⁵

Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.

Behold four Kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forked beard;
And four fair Queens, whose hands sustain a
flower

Th' expressive emblem of their softer power;
Four Knaves, in garbs succinct,³ a trusty-
band, ⁴¹

Caps on their heads, and halberts in their
hand

And party-colored troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.

The skilful nymph reviews her force with
care; ⁴⁵

"Let Spades be trumps!" she said, and
trumps they were.

Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio ⁴ first, unconquerable lord!

Led off two captive trumps, and swept the
board. ⁵⁰

As many more Manillio ⁵ forced to yield,
And marched a victor from the verdant
field.

Him Basto ⁶ followed, but his fate more hard
Gained but one trump and one plebeian card.
With his broad sabre next, a chief in years, ⁵⁵

¹ Dinner was at three or four o'clock.

² In the game of ombre the three highest cards were called matadores.

³ close-fitting.

⁴ The ace of spades.

⁵ The deuce of clubs, the second highest card if spades are trumps.

⁶ The ace of clubs, third in order of the "matadores."

The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight revealed;
The rest his many colored robe concealed.
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince en-
gage,

Proves the just victim of his royal rage. ⁶⁰
Even mighty Pam,¹ that kings and queens
o'erthrew,

And mowed down armies in the fights of
Loo,

Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguished by the victor Spade.

Thus far both armies to Belinda yield; ⁶⁵
Now to the Baron Fate inclines the field.
His warlike amazon her host invades,
Th' imperial consort of the crown of Spades.
The Club's black tyrant first her victim died,
Spite of his haughty mien and barbarous
pride; ⁷⁰

What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And of all monarchs only grasps the globe?

The Baron now his Diamonds pours
apace; ⁷⁵

Th' embroidered King who shows but half
his face,

And his refulgent Queen, with powers com-
bined,

Of broken troops an easy conquest find.

Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder
seen,

With throngs promiscuous strew the level
green. ⁸⁰

Thus when dispersed a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye;
The pierced battalions disunited fall ⁸⁵
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms
them all.

The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of
Hearts.

At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look; ⁹⁰
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.²
And now (as oft in some distempered state)
On one nice trick depends the general fate!
An Ace of Hearts steps forth: the King
unseen ⁹⁵

Lurked in her hand, and mourned his captive
Queen.

¹ The Knave of Clubs, the highest card in the game of loo.

² Belinda and the Baron have each won four tricks. If the Baron wins the odd trick, he will "set" her, or "give her Codille."

He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace.¹
The nymph, exulting, fills with shouts the
sky;

The walls, the woods, and long canals re-
ply. 100

Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.
Sudden these honors shall be snatched away,
And cursed for ever this victorious day.

For lo! the board with cups and spoons is
crowned, 105
The berries² crackle, and the mill turns
round;

On shining altars of japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking
tide. 110

At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the Fair her airy band;
Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor
fanned,

Some o'er her lap their careful plumes dis-
played, 115

Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.
Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see thro' all things with his half-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapors to the Baron's brain
New stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain. 120
Ah, cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,
Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's fate!
Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair!

But when to mischief mortals bend their
will, 125

How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edged weapon from her shining case:
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the
fight. 130

He takes the gift with reverence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her
head.

Swift to the Lock a thousand sprites re-
pair; 135

A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the
hair;

And thrice they twitched the diamond in her
ear;

Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe
drew near.

Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought. 140
As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched th' ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly Lover lurking at her heart.
Amazed, confused, he found his power ex-
pired, 145

Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.
The Peer now spreads the glittering forfex
wide,

To inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
Even then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched Sylph too fondly interposed; 150
Fate urged the shears, and cut the Sylph in
twain
(But airy substance soon unites again).

The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!

Then flashed the living lightning from her
eyes, 155

And screams of horror rend th' affrighted
skies.

Not louder shrieks to pitying Heaven are
cast,

When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe
their last;

Or when rich China vessels, fallen from
high,

In glittering dust and painted fragments
lie! 160

"Let wreaths of triumph now my temples
twine,"

The Victor cried, "the glorious prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in
air,

Or in a coach and six the British Fair,
As long as Atalantis¹ shall be read, 165

Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,

When numerous wax-lights in bright order
blaze:

While nymphs take treats, or assignations
give,

So long my honor, name, and praise shall
live! 170

What Time would spare, from Steel receives
its date,

And monuments, like men, submit to Fate!
Steel could the labor of the Gods destroy,

And strike to dust th' imperial towers of
Troy;

Steel could the works of mortal pride con-
found 175

And new triumphal arches to the ground.

¹ *The New Atalantis*, by Mrs. Manley, published 1709. The slanders of persons of quality which it contained, led to the author's arrest. The book was read by everybody.

¹ Except as one of the "matadores," the ace is low.
² i.e. coffee-beans.

What wonder, then, fair Nymph! thy hairs
should feel
The conquering force of unresisted steel?"

CANTO IV

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppress,
And secret passions labored in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seized alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,

Not ardent lovers robbed of all their bliss, 5
Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her mantua's pinned awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, said Virgin! for thy ravished hair. 10

For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew,
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite
As ever sullied the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repaired to search the gloomy cave of Spleen.¹ 16

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the Gnome,
And in a vapor reached the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded East is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto sheltered close from air, 21
And screened in shades from day's detested glare,

She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim² at her head.
Two handmaids wait the throne; alike in place, 25

But differing far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature, like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed!

With store of prayers for mornings, nights,
and noons,
Her hand is filled; her bosom with lam-poons. 30

There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practised to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride;
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe, 35
Wrapt in a gown for sickness and for show.
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.

A constant vapor o'er the palace flies

¹ The spleen was thought of as the seat of ill-humor and depression, the "vapors." Spleen is here the personification of ill-humor.

² sick-headache.

Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise; 40
Dreadful as hermits' dreams in haunted shades,

Or bright as visions of expiring maids:
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,

Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires;

Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes, 45
And crystal domes, and angels in machines.

Unnumbered throngs on every side are seen,

Of bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.

Here living Teapots stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout: 50

A Pipkin there, like Homer's Tripod walks;
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pie talks;
Men prove with child, as powerful fancy works,

And maids turned bottles call aloud for corks.
Safe passed the Gnome thro' this fantastic band, 55

A branch of healing spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus addressed the Power — "Hail, wayward Queen!

Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen:
Parent of Vapors and of female wit,
Who give th' hysteric or poetic fit, 60
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;

Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.
A nymph there is that all your power disdains, 65

And thousands more in equal mirth maintain.

But oh! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like citron-waters ' matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game; 70
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caused suspicion when no soul was rude,

Or discomposed the head-dress of a prude,
Or e'er to costive lapdog gave disease, 75
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease,

Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin;
That single act gives half the world the spleen."

The Goddess, with a discontented air,
Seems to reject him tho' she grants his prayer. 80

¹ spirits distilled from citron-rind.

A wondrous Bag with both her hands she binds,

Like that where once Ulysses held the winds;
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.

A Vial next she fills with fainting fears, 85
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.

The Gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.

Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he found,

Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound. 90
Full o'er their heads the swelling Bag he rent,

And all the Furies issued at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.

"O wretched maid!" she spread her hands,
and cried 95
(While Hampton's echoes, "Wretched maid!" replied),

Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound?
For this with torturing irons wreathed around? 100

For this with fillets strained your tender head,

And bravely bore the double loads of lead?
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the fops envy, and the ladies stare!
Honor forbid! at whose unrivalled shrine
Ease, Pleasure, Virtue, all, our sex resign. 106

Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,
And all your honor in a whisper lost! 110
How shall I, then, your hapless fame defend?
'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Exposed thro' crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heightened by the diamond's circling rays, 115

On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall grass in Hyde Park Circus grow,
And Wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow; 1

Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lapdogs, parrots, perish all!"

She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs, 121

And bids her beau demand the precious hairs

1 Within the sound of the bells of the church of St. Mary-le-Bow — not a fashionable quarter.

(Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane):
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face, 125

He first the snuff-box opened, then the case,
And thus broke out — "My lord, why, what the devil!

Z—ds! damn the Lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!

Plague on 't! 'tis past a jest — nay, prithee, pox!

Give her the hair." — He spoke, and rapped his box. 130

"It grieves me much," replied the Peer again,

"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain:

But by this Lock, this sacred Lock, I swear
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honors shall renew, 135
Clipped from the lovely head where late it grew),

That, while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread

The long-contended honors of her head. 140
But Umbriel, hateful Gnome, forbears not so;

He breaks the Vial whence the sorrows flow.

Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,

Her eyes half-languishing, half drowned in tears;

On her heaved bosom hung her drooping head, 145

Which with a sigh she raised, and thus she said:

"For ever cursed be this detested day,
Which snatched my best, my favorite curl away!

Happy! ah, ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen! 150

Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of courts to numerous ills betrayed.
O had I rather unadmired remained

In some lone isle, or distant northern land;
Where the gilt chariot never marks the way, 155

Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea!

There kept my charms concealed from mortal eye,

Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What moved my mind with youthful lords to roam?

O had I stayed, and said my prayers at
home; 160
'Twas this the morning omens seemed to
tell,
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-
box fell;
The tottering china shook without a wind;
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most
unkind!
A Sylph, too, warned me of the threats of
fate, 165
In mystic visions, now believed too late!
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what even thy rapine
spares.
These, in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy
neck; 170
The sister-lock now sits uncouth alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands,
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious
hands.
O hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize 175
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"

CANTO V

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears;
But Fate and Jove had stopped the Baron's
ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fixed the Trojan¹ could remain, 5
While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain;
Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan;
Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began:
"Say, why are beauties praised and hon-
ored most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's
toast? 10
Why decked with all that land and sea afford,
Why angels called, and angel-like adored?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-
gloved beaux?
Why bows the side-box from its inmost
rows?
How vain are all these glories, all our
pains, 15
Unless Good Sense preserve what Beauty
gains;
That men may say when we the front-box
grace,
'Behold the first in virtue as in face!'
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charmed the smallpox, or chased old age
away; 20

1 Æneas.

Who would not scorn what housewife's cares
produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay, ogle, might become a saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay, 25
Curled or uncurled, since locks will turn to
gray;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man must die a maid;
What then remains, but well our power to
use,
And keep good humor still whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear, good humor can pre-
vail, 31
When airs, and flights, and screams, and
scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the
soul."
So spoke the dame, but no applause en-
sued; 35
Belinda frowned, Thalestris called her prude.
"To arms, to arms!" the fierce virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whale-
bones crack; 40
Heroes' and heroines' shouts confusedly rise,
And bass and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are
found,
Like Gods they fight nor dread a mortal
wound.
So when bold Homer makes the Gods
engage, 45
And heavenly breasts with human passions
rage;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms;
Jove's thunder roars, Heaven trembles all
around,
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps
resound; 50
Earth shakes her nodding towers, the ground
gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
Triumphant Umbriel, on a sconce's height,
Clapped his glad wings, and sat to view the
fight:
Propped on their bodkin-spears, the sprites
survey 55
The growing combat, or assist the fray.
While thro' the press enraged Thalestris
flies,
And scatters death around from both her
eyes,
A Beau and Witling perished in the throng,

One died in metaphor, and one in song: 60
 "O cruel Nymph! a living death I bear,"
 Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
 A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,
 "Those eyes are made so killing" — was his
 last.
 Thus on Mæander's flowery margin lies 65
 Th' expiring swan, and as he sings he dies.
 When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa
 down,
 Chloe stepped in, and killed him with a frown;
 She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,
 But, at her smile, the beau revived again. 70
 Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
 Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair;
 The doubtful beam long nods from side to
 side;
 At length the wits mount up, the hairs sub-
 side.
 See fierce Belinda on the Baron flies, 75
 With more than usual lightning in her eyes;
 Nor feared the chief th' unequal fight to try,
 Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
 But this bold lord, with manly strength en-
 dued,
 She with one finger and a thumb subdued: 80
 Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
 A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
 The Gnomes direct, to every atom just,
 The pungent grains of titillating dust.
 Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'er-
 flows, 85
 And the high dome reëchoes to his nose.
 "Now meet thy fate," incensed Belinda
 cried,
 And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
 (The same, his ancient personage to deck,
 Her great-great-grandsire wore about his
 neck, 90
 In three seal-rings; which after, melted
 down,
 Formed a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
 Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
 The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
 Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
 Which long she wore and now Belinda
 wears.) 96
 "Boast not my fall," he cried, "insulting
 foe!
 Thou by some other shalt be laid as low;
 Nor think to die dejects my lofty mind:
 All that I dread is leaving you behind! 100
 Rather than so, ah, let me still survive,
 And burn in Cupid's flames — but burn
 alive."
 "Restore the Lock!" she cries; and all around
 "Restore the Lock!" the vaulted roofs re-
 bound.

Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain 105
 Roared for the handkerchief that caused his
 pain.
 But see how oft ambitious aims are crossed,
 And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!
 The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with
 pain, 109
 In every place is sought, but sought in vain:
 With such a prize no mortal must be blest.
 So Heaven decrees! with Heaven who can
 contest?
 Some thought it mounted to the lunar
 sphere,
 Since all things lost on earth are treasured
 there.
 There heroes' wits are kept in ponderous
 vases, 115
 And beaux' in snuffboxes and tweezer-cases.
 There broken vows, and deathbed alms are
 found,
 And lovers' hearts with ends of riband bound,
 The courtier's promises, and sick man's
 prayers,
 The smiles of harlots, and the tears of
 heirs, 120
 Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
 Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.
 But trust the Muse — she saw it upward
 rise,
 Tho' marked by none but quick poetic eyes
 (So Rome's great founder to the heavens
 withdrew, 125
 To Proculus alone confessed in view):
 A sudden star, it shot thro' liquid air,
 And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
 Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,
 The heavens bespangling with dishevelled
 light. 130
 The Sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
 And pleased pursue its progress thro' the
 skies.
 This the beau monde shall from the Mall
 survey,
 And hail with music its propitious ray;
 This the blest lover shall for Venus take, 135
 And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake;
 This Partridge¹ soon shall view in cloudless
 skies,
 When next he looks thro' Galileo's eyes;
 And hence th' egregious wizard shall fore-
 doom
 The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome. 140
 Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn thy
 ravished hair,
 Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!

¹ John Partridge was a ridiculous star-gazer, who in his almanacks every year never failed to predict the downfall of the Pope and the King of France. (Pope.)

Not all the tresses that fair head can boast
 Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.
 For after all the murders of your eye, ¹⁴⁵
 When, after millions slain, yourself shall
 die;
 When those fair suns shall set, as set they
 must,
 And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
 This Lock the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
 And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's
 name. ¹⁵⁰

ELOISA TO ABELARD

1717

Eloisa to Abelard is the only one of his longer poems in which Pope has chosen a thoroughly romantic theme. It is such a subject as Byron would have loved to handle. But in spite of its medieval setting, its pathos and passion, it misses the spirit of true romance. It is written with a too rhetorical insistence on the antithesis between "Grace and Nature, Virtue and Passion," rather than with the true psychological realization which marks the best of Browning's dramatic monologues. It is theatrical rather than in the best sense dramatic. But if it is rhetoric, it is at any rate magnificent rhetoric; and nowhere has Pope elicited from his heroic couplet a more sweet and stately music.

ARGUMENT

Abelard and Eloisa flourished in the twelfth century; they were two of the most distinguished persons of their age in Learning and Beauty, but for nothing more famous than for their unfortunate passion. After a long course of calamities, they retired each to a several convent, and consecrated the remainder of their days to Religion. It was many years after this separation that a letter of Abelard's to a friend, which contained the history of his misfortune, fell into the hands of Eloisa. This, awakening all her tenderness, occasioned those celebrated letters (out of which the following is partly extracted), which give so lively a picture of the struggles of Grace and Nature, Virtue and Passion.

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
 Where heavenly-pensive Contemplation
 dwells,
 And ever-musing Melancholy reigns,
 What means this tumult in a vestal's veins?
 Why rove my thoughts beyond this last retreat?
 Why feels my heart its long-forgotten heat?
 Yet, yet I love! — From Abelard it came,
 And Eloisa yet must kiss the name.

Dear fatal name! rest ever unrevealed,
 Nor pass these lips, in holy silence sealed: ¹⁰
 Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
 Where, mixed with God's, his loved idea lies:
 O write it not, my hand — the name appears
 Already written — wash it out, my tears!
 In vain lost Eloisa weeps and prays, ¹⁵
 Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys.

Relentless walls! whose darksome round
 contains
 Repentant sighs, and voluntary pains:
 Ye rugged rocks, which holy knees have
 worn;
 Ye grotts and caverns shagged with horrid
 thorn! ²⁰
 Shrines! where their vigils pale-eyed virgins
 keep,
 And pitying saints, whose statues learn to
 weep!
 Tho' cold like you, unmoved and silent grown,
 I have not yet forgot myself to stone.
 All is not Heaven's while Abelard has part, ²⁵
 Still rebel Nature holds out half my heart;
 Nor prayers nor fasts its stubborn pulse re-
 strain,
 Nor tears, for ages taught to flow in vain.
 Soon as thy letters trembling I unclose,
 That well-known name awakens all my
 woes. ³⁰
 Oh name for ever sad! for ever dear!
 Still breathed in sighs, still ushered with a
 tear.
 I tremble too, where'er my own I find,
 Some dire misfortune follows close behind.
 Line after line my gushing eyes o'erflow, ³⁵
 Led thro' a safe variety of woe:
 Now warm in love, now withering in my
 bloom,
 Lost in a convent's solitary gloom!
 There stern religion quenched th' unwilling
 flame,
 There died the best of passions, Love and
 Fame. ⁴⁰
 Yet write, O write me all, that I may join
 Griefs to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine.
 Nor foes nor fortune take this power away;
 And is my Abelard less kind than they?
 Tears still are mine, and those I need not
 spare; ⁴⁵
 Love but demands what else were shed in
 prayer.
 No happier task these faded eyes pursue;
 To read and weep is all they now can do.
 Then share thy pain, allow that sad relief;
 Ah, more than share it, give me all thy
 grief. ⁵⁰
 Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's
 aid,
 Some banished lover, or some captive maid;
 They live, they speak, they breathe what
 love inspires,
 Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires;
 The virgin's wish without her fears im-
 part, ⁵⁵
 Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart,
 Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,

And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.
 Thou know'st how guiltless first I met
 thy flame,
 When Love approached me under Friend-
 ship's name; 60
 My fancy formed thee of angelic kind,
 Some emanation of th' all-beauteous Mind.
 Those smiling eyes, attempering every ray,
 Shone sweetly lambent with celestial day,
 Guiltless I gazed; Heaven listened while you
 sung; 65
 And truths divine came mended from that
 tongue.
 From lips like those what precept failed to
 move?
 Too soon they taught me 'twas no sin to
 love:
 Back thro' the paths of pleasing sense I
 ran,
 Nor wished an angel whom I loved a man. 70
 Dim and remote the joys of saints I see;
 Nor envy them that Heaven I lose for thee.
 How oft, when pressed to marriage, have I
 said,
 Curse on all laws but those which Love has
 made!
 Love, free as air, at sight of human ties, 75
 Spreads his light wings, and in a moment
 flies.
 Let Wealth, let Honor, wait the wedded
 dame,
 August her deed, and sacred be her fame;
 Before true passion all those views remove;
 Fame, Wealth, and Honor! what are you to
 Love? 80
 The jealous God, when we profane his fires,
 Those restless passions in revenge inspires,
 And bids them make mistaken mortals groan,
 Who seek in love for aught but love alone.
 Should at my feet the world's great master
 fall, 85
 Himself, his throne, his world, I'd scorn 'em
 all;
 Not Cæsar's empress would I deign to prove;
 No, make me mistress to the man I love;
 If there be yet another name more free,
 More fond than mistress, make me that to
 thee! 90
 O happy state! when souls each other draw,
 When Love is liberty, and Nature law:
 All then is full, possessing and possessed,
 No craving void left aching in the breast:
 Even thought meets thought, ere from the
 lips it part, 95
 And each warm wish springs mutual from the
 heart.
 This sure is bliss (if bliss on earth there be),
 And once the lot of Abelard and me.

Alas, how changed! what sudden horrors
 rise!
 A naked lover bound and bleeding lies! 100
 Where, where was Eloise? her voice, her
 hand,
 Her poniard had opposed the dire command.
 Barbarian, stay! that bloody stroke restrain;
 The crime was common, common be the pain.
 I can no more; by shame, by rage sup-
 pressed, 105
 Let tears and burning blushes speak the rest.
 Canst thou forget that sad, that solemn
 day,
 When victims at yon altar's foot we lay?
 Canst thou forget what tears that moment
 fell,
 When, warm in youth, I bade the world fare-
 well? 110
 As with cold lips I kissed the sacred veil,
 The shrines all trembled, and the lamps grew
 pale:
 Heaven scarce believed the conquest it sur-
 veyed,
 And saints with wonder heard the vows I
 made.
 Yet then, to those dread altars as I drew, 115
 Not on the cross my eyes were fixed, but you:
 Not grace, or zeal, love only was my call,
 And if I lose thy love, I lose my all.
 Come! with thy looks, thy words, relieve my
 woe; 119
 Those still at least are left thee to bestow.
 Still on that breast enamored let me lie,
 Still drink delicious poison from thy eye,
 Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be pressed;
 Give all thou canst — and let me dream the
 rest.
 Ah, no! instruct me other joys to prize, 125
 With other beauties charm my partial eyes!
 Full in my view set all the bright abode,
 And make my soul quit Abelard for God.
 Ah, think at least thy flock deserves thy
 care,
 Plants of thy hand, and children of thy
 prayer. 130
 From the false world in early youth they fled,
 By thee to mountains, wilds, and deserts led.
 You raised these hallowed walls; the desert
 smiled,
 And Paradise was opened in the wild. 134
 No weeping orphan saw his father's stores
 Our shrines irradiate or emblaze the floors;
 No silver saints, by dying misers given,
 Here bribed the rage of ill-requited Heaven;
 But such plain roofs as piety could raise,
 And only vocal with the Maker's praise. 140

¹ Eloisa's family, on learning that Abelard was her lover, took him unawares, bound and mutilated him.

In these lone walls (their day's eternal bound),

These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets crowned,

Where awful arches make a noonday night,
And the dim windows shed a solemn light,

Thy eyes diffused a reconciling ray, ¹⁴⁵

And gleams of glory brightened all the day.

But now no face divine contentment wears,

'Tis all blank sadness, or continual tears.

See how the force of others' prayers I try,

(O pious fraud of amorous charity!) ¹⁵⁰

But why should I on others' prayers depend?

Come thou, my father, brother, husband,
friend!

Ah, let thy handmaid, sister, daughter, move,

And all those tender names in one, thy love!

The darksome pines, that o'er yon rocks
reclined, ¹⁵⁵

Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,

The wandering streams that shine between
the hills,

The grotts that echo to the tinkling rills,

The dying gales that pant upon the trees,

The lakes that quiver to the curling
breeze — ¹⁶⁰

No more these scenes my meditation aid,

Or lull to rest the visionary maid:

But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,

Long-sounding aisles and intermingled
graves,

Black Melancholy sits, and round her
throws ¹⁶⁵

A death-like silence, and a dread repose:

Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,

Shades every flower, and darkens every
green,

Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,

And breathes a browner horror on the
woods. ¹⁷⁰

Yet here for ever, ever must I stay;

Sad proof how well a lover can obey!

Death, only Death can break the lasting
chain;

And here, even then shall my cold dust re-
main;

Here all its frailties, all its flames resign, ¹⁷⁵

And wait till 'tis no sin to mix with thine.

Ah, wretch! believed the spouse of God in
vain,

Confessed within the slave of Love and man.

Assist me, Heaven! but whence arose that
prayer?

Sprung it from piety or from despair? ¹⁸⁰

Even here, where frozen Chastity retires,

Love finds an altar for forbidden fires.

I ought to grieve, but cannot what I ought;

I mourn the lover, not lament the fault;

I view my crime, but kindle at the view, ¹⁸⁵

Repent old pleasures, and solicit new;

Now turned to Heaven, I weep my past
offence,

Now think of thee, and curse my innocence.

Of all affliction taught a lover yet,

'Tis sure the hardest science to forget! ¹⁹⁰

How shall I lose the sin, yet keep the sense,

And love th' offender, yet detest th' offence?

How the dear object from the crime remove,

Or how distinguish Penitence from Love?

Unequal task! a passion to resign, ¹⁹⁵

For hearts so touched, so pierced, so lost as
mine:

Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,

How often must it love, how often hate!

How often hope, despair, resent, regret,

Conceal, disdain — do all things but for-
get! ²⁰⁰

But let Heaven seize it, all at once 'tis fired;

Not touched, but rapt; not wakened, but
inspired!

O come! O teach me Nature to subdue,

Renounce my love, my life, myself — and

You:

Fill my fond heart with God alone, for he ²⁰⁵

Alone can rival, can succeed to thee.

How happy is the blameless vestal's lot!

The world forgetting, by the world forgot;

Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,

Each prayer accepted, and each wish re-
signed; ²¹⁰

Labor and rest, that equal periods keep;

Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep;

Desires composed, affections ever even;

Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to
Heaven.

Grace shines around her with serenest

beams, ²¹⁵

And whispering angels prompt her golden

dreams.

For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,

And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes;

For her the spouse prepares the bridal ring;

For her white virgins hymeneals sing; ²²⁰

To sounds of heavenly harps she dies away,

And melts in visions of eternal day.

Far other dreams my erring soul employ,

Far other raptures of unholy joy.

When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day,

Fancy restores what vengeance snatched

away, ²²⁶

Then conscience sleeps, and leaving Nature

free,

All my loose soul unbounded springs to thee!

Oh curst, dear horrors of all-conscious night!

How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight!

Provoking demons all restraint remove, ²³¹

And stir within me every source of love.
 I hear thee, view thee, gaze o'er all thy
 charms,
 And round thy phantom glue my clasping
 arms.
 I wake:—no more I hear, no more I
 view, 235
 The phantom flies me, as unkind as you.
 I call aloud; it hears not what I say:
 I stretch my empty arms; it glides away.
 To dream once more I close my willing eyes;
 Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise! 240
 Alas, no more! methinks we wandering go
 Thro' dreary wastes, and weep each other's
 woe,
 Where round some moldering tower pale
 ivy creeps,
 And low-browed rocks hang nodding o'er the
 deeps.
 Sudden you mount, you beckon from the
 skies; 245
 Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds
 arise.
 I shriek, start up, the same sad prospect find,
 And wake to all the griefs I left behind.
 For thee the Fates, severely kind, ordain
 A cool suspense from pleasure and from
 pain; 250
 Thy life a long dead calm of fixed repose;
 No pulse that riots, and no blood that glows.
 Still as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow,
 Or moving spirit bade the waters flow;
 Soft as the slumbers of a saint forgiven, 255
 And mild as opening gleams of promised
 Heaven.
 Come, Abelard! for what hast thou to
 dread?
 The torch of Venus burns not for the dead.
 Nature stands checked; Religion disapproves;
 Even thou art cold — yet Eloisa loves. 260
 Ah, hopeless, lasting flames; like those that
 burn
 To light the dead, and warm th' unfruitful
 urn!
 What scenes appear where'er I turn my
 view;
 The dear ideas, where I fly, pursue;
 Rise in the grove, before the altar rise, 265
 Stain all my soul, and wanton in my eyes.
 I waste the matin lamp in sighs for thee,
 Thy image steals between my God and me:
 Thy voice I seem in every hymn to hear,
 With every bead I drop too soft a tear. 270
 When from the censer clouds of fragrance
 roll,
 And swelling organs lift the rising soul,
 One thought of thee puts all the pomp to
 flight,

Priests, tapers, temples, swim before my
 sight:
 In seas of flame my plunging soul is
 drowned, 275
 While altars blaze, and angels tremble round.
 While prostrate here in humble grief I lie,
 Kind virtuous drops just gathering in my
 eye,
 While praying, trembling, in the dust I roll,
 And dawning grace is opening on my soul: 280
 Come, if thou dar'st, all charming as thou
 art!
 Oppose thyself to Heaven; dispute my heart;
 Come, with one glance of those deluding
 eyes
 Blot out each bright idea of the skies;
 Take back that grace, those sorrows and
 those tears, 285
 Take back my fruitless penitence and pray-
 ers;
 Snatch me, just mounting, from the blest
 abode:
 Assist the fiends, and tear me from my God!
 No, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole;
 Rise Alps between us! and whole oceans roll!
 Ah, come not, write not, think not once of
 me, 291
 Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.
 Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign;
 Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.
 Fair eyes, and tempting looks (which yet I
 view), 295
 Long loved, adored ideas, all adieu!
 O Grace serene! O Virtue heavenly fair!
 Divine Oblivion of low-thoughted care!
 Fresh blooming Hope, gay daughter of the
 sky!
 And Faith, our early immortality! 300
 Enter each mild, each amicable guest;
 Receive, and wrap me in eternal rest!
 See in her cell sad Eloisa spread,
 Propt on some tomb, a neighbor of the
 dead.
 In each low wind methinks a spirit calls, 305
 And more than echoes talk along the walls.
 Here, as I watched the dying lamps around,
 From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound:
 "Come, sister, come! (it said, or seemed to
 say)
 Thy place is here, sad sister, come away; 310
 Once, like thyself, I trembled, wept, and
 prayed,
 Love's victim then, tho' now a sainted maid:
 But all is calm in this eternal sleep;
 Here grief forgets to groan, and love to weep;
 Even superstition loses every fear: 315
 For God, not man, absolves our frailties
 'here."

I come, I come! prepare your roseate
bowers,
Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flowers.
Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
Where flames refined in breasts seraphic
glow; 320

Thou, Abelard! the last sad office pay,
And smooth my passage to the realms of day:
See my lips tremble, and my eyeballs roll,
Suck my last breath, and catch my flying
soul!

Ah, no — in sacred vestments mayst thou
stand, 325

The hallowed taper trembling in thy hand,
Present the cross before my lifted eye,
Teach me at once, and learn of me, to die.
Ah then, thy once loved Eloisa see!

It will be then no crime to gaze on me. 330

See from my cheek the transient roses fly!

See the last sparkle languish in my eye!

Till every motion, pulse, and breath be o'er,

And even my Abelard be loved no more.

O Death, all-eloquent! you only prove 335

What dust we doat on, when 'tis man we
love.

Then too, when Fate shall thy fair frame
destroy

(That cause of all my guilt, and all my joy),

In trance ecstatic may thy pangs be drowned,

Bright clouds descend, and angels watch

thee round; 340

From opening skies may streaming glories

shine,

And saints embrace thee with a love like

mine.

May one kind grave unite each hapless
name,¹

And graft my love immortal on thy fame!

Then, ages hence, when all my woes are

o'er, 345

When this rebellious heart shall beat no more;

If ever chance two wandering lovers brings,

To Paraclete's white walls and silver springs,

O'er the pale marble shall they join their

heads,

And drink the falling tears each other

sheds; 350

Then sadly say, with mutual pity moved,

"O may we never love as these have loved!"

From the full choir, when loud hosannas rise,

And swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice,

Amid that scene if some relenting eye 355

Glance on the stone where our cold relics lie,

Devotion's self shall steal a thought from

Heaven,

¹ Abelard and Eloisa were interred in the same grave, or in monuments adjoining, in the Monastery of the Paraclete; he died in the year 1142, she in 1163. (Pope.)

One human tear shall drop, and be forgiven.
And sure if Fate some future bard shall
join

In sad similitude of griefs to mine, 360
Condemned whole years in absence to de-
plore,

And image charms he must behold no
more, —

Such if there be, who loves so long, so well,

Let him our sad, our tender story tell;

The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive

ghost; 365

He best can paint them who shall feel them

most.

AN ESSAY ON MAN

When Pope "stooped to truth and moralized his song," leaving the realm of fancy for that of moral and social criticism, he found the province of poetry over which he was best fitted to reign. The didactic poem, the essay in verse, does not require sustained power of creative imagination. Its primary material is intellectual thought; its poetry resides in the splendor of illustration, the beauty of musical phrasing, the intensity of feeling with which this thought is driven home to the reader's mind and heart. The philosophy of the *Essay on Man* is not original with Pope, who gratefully acknowledges that he learned it from his "guide, philosopher, and friend," the brilliant but superficial Bolingbroke to whom the poem is dedicated. Its facile optimism, derived ultimately from Leibnitz, which declares that evil is only apparent, that "Whatever is, is right," was more acceptable to Pope's contemporaries than to us. Like Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, it speaks to its own generation rather than to ours. But if the philosophy is shallow and outworn, the poetry remains — the terse brilliancy of epigram, the moving lyrical quality of such passages as the third and tenth sections of Epistle I, the haunting power of such a line as

Die of a rose in aromatic pain,

a line which might well have been written by Keats.

The whole work consists of four essays, which were published separately between 1732 and 1734.

THE DESIGN

Having proposed to write some pieces on Human Life and Manners, such as, to use my Lord Bacon's expression, "come home to men's business and bosoms," I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering Man in the abstract, his nature and his state: since to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

The science of Human Nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few clear points: there are not many certain

truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind, as in that of the body; more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels, the conformations and uses of which will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last; and, I will venture to say, they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice more than advanced the theory of morality. If I could flatter myself that this Essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible and in forming a temperate, yet not inconsistent, and a short, yet not imperfect, system of ethics.

This I might have done in prose; but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious; that principles, maxims, or precepts, so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards: the other may seem odd, but it is true: I found I could express them more shortly this way than in prose itself; and nothing is more certain than that much of the force as well as grace of arguments or instructions depends on their conciseness. I was unable to treat this part of my subject more in detail without becoming dry and tedious; or more poetically without sacrificing perspicuity to ornament, without wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning. If any man can unite all these without diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

What is now published is only to be considered as a general Map of Man, marking out no more than the greater parts, their extent, their limits, and their connexion, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow; consequently these epistles in their progress (if I have health and leisure to make any progress) will be less dry, and more susceptible of poetical ornament. I am here only opening the fountains, and clearing the passage: to deduce the rivers, to follow them in their course, and to observe their effects, may be a task more agreeable.

EPISTLE I

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH RESPECT TO THE UNIVERSE

ARGUMENT

Of Man in the abstract. I. That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things, verse 17, etc. II. That Man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown, verse 35, etc. III. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends, verse 77, etc. IV. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of Man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice, of his dispensations, verse 113, etc. V. The absurdity of conceiving himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural, verse 131, etc. VI. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while, on the one hand, he demands the perfections of the angels, and, on the other, the bodily qualifications of the brutes; though to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree would render him miserable, verse 173, etc. VII. That throughout the whole visible world a universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man. The gradations of Sense, Instinct, Thought, Reflection, Reason: that Reason alone counter-weighs all the other faculties, verse 207, etc. VIII. How much further this order and subordination of living creatures may extend above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed, verse 213, etc. IX. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, verse 290, etc. X. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state, verse 281, etc., to the end.

Awake, my St. JOHN!¹ leave all meaner things
To low ambition and the pride of Kings.
Let us, since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die,
Expatriate free o'er all this scene of man; 5
A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
A wild, where weeds and flowers promiscu-
ous shoot,

Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield; 10
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
Of all who blindly creep or sightless soar;
Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid² where we
can, 15

But vindicate the ways of God to man.

I. Say first, of God above or Man below
What can we reason but from what we know?
Of man what see we but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer? 20
Thro' worlds unnumbered tho' the God be
known,

'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.
He who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs, 25
What other planets circle other suns,
What varied being peoples every star,
May tell why Heaven has made us as we are:
But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,
The strong connexions, nice dependencies, 30
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Looked thro'; or can a part contain the whole?

Is the great chain that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God or thee?

II. Presumptuous man! the reason
wouldst thou find, 35
Why formed so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess
Why formed no weaker, blinder, and no less!
Ask of thy mother earth why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they
shade! 40

Or ask of yonder argent fields above
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove!

Of systems possible, if 'tis confest
That wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must fall or not coherent be, 45
And all that rises rise in due degree;
Then in the scale of reasoning life 'tis plain
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as
Man: 48

And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)

¹ Henry St. John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, a close friend of Pope from whom Pope learned most of the philosophical ideas contained in this poem.

² kindly.

Is only this, — if God has placed him wrong?

Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to all.

In human works, tho' labored on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose
gain;

In God's, one single can its end produce, 55
Yet serve to second too some other use:

So man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal:
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

When the proud steed shall know why man
restrains

His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the
clod,

Is now a victim, and now Egypt's God;
Then shall man's pride and dulness compre-
hend 65

His actions', passions', being's, use and end;
Why doing, suffering, checked, impelled; and
why

This hour a Slave, the next a Deity.

Then say not man's imperfect, Heaven in
fault;

Say rather man's as perfect as he ought; 70
His knowledge measured to his state and
place,

His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matter soon or late, or here or there?
The blest to-day is as completely so 75
As who began a thousand years ago.

III. Heaven from all creatures hides the
book of Fate,

All but the page prescribed, their present
state;

From brutes what men, from men what
spirits know;

Or who could suffer being here below? 80

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason would he skip and play?
Pleased to the last he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his
blood.

O blindness to the future! kindly given, 85
That each may fill the circle marked by
Heaven;

Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled, 89
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions
soar;

Wait the great teacher Death, and God
adore.

What future bliss He gives not thee to know,

But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast: 95
Man never is, but always to be, blest.

The soul, uneasy and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates¹ in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored
mind

Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the
wind; 100

His soul proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk² or milky way;

Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler
Heaven,

Some safer world in depth of woods em-
braced, 105

Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land
behold,

No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for
gold.

To be, contents his natural desire; 109

He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire;

But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,

His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of
sense

Weigh thy opinion against Providence; 114

Call imperfection what thou fanciest such;

Say, here he gives too little, there too much;

Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,³

Yet cry, if man's unhappy, God's unjust;

If man alone engross not Heaven's high
care, 119

Alone made perfect here, immortal there:

Snatch from his hand the balance and the
rod,

Rejudge his justice, be the god of God.

In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies;

All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies!

Pride still is aiming at the blessed abodes, 125

Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods

Aspiring to be Gods if Angels fell,

Aspiring to be Angels men rebel:

And who but wishes to invert the laws

Of order, sins against th' Eternal Cause, 130

V. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies
shine,

Earth for whose use, — Pride answers,

" 'Tis for mine:

For me kind Nature wakes her genial power,

Suckles each herb, and spreads out every

flower;

Annual for me the grape, the rose, renew 135

The juice nectareous and the balmy dew;

For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;

¹ wanders without restraint.

² The orbit of the Sun.

³ appetite.

For me health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies." 140

But errs not Nature from this gracious
end,

From burning suns when livid deaths de-
scend,

When earthquakes swallow, or when tem-
pests sweep

Towns to one grave, whole nations to the
deep?

"No," 'tis replied, "the first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial but by general laws; 146
Th' exceptions few; some change since all
began;

And what created perfect?" — Why then
man?

If the great end be human happiness,
Then Nature deviates; and can man do
less? 150

As much that end a constant course requires
Of showers and sunshine, as of man's desires;
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
As men for ever temperate, calm, and wise.
If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's
design, 155

Why then a Borgia or a Catiline?

Who knows but He, whose hand the light-
ning forms,

Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the
storms;

Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon¹ loose to scourge
mankind? 160

From pride, from pride, our very reasoning
springs;

Account for moral as for natural things:

Why charge we Heaven in those, in these
acquit?

In both, to reason right is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear, 165
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind,
That never passion discomposed the mind:
But all subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life. 170
The general order, since the whole began,
Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

VI. What would this Man? Now up-
ward will he soar,

And little less than Angel, would be more;
Now looking downwards, just as grieved
appears 175

To want the strength of bulls, the fur of
bears.

Made for his use all creatures if he call,
Say what their use, had he the powers of all?

¹ Alexander the Great.

Nature to these without profusion kind, 170
The proper organs, proper powers assigned;
Each seeming want compensated of course,
Here with degrees of swiftmess, there of force;
All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate;
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own: 185
Is Heaven unkind to man, and man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleased with nothing if not blessed with
all?

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing
find)

Is not to act or think beyond mankind; 190
No powers of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.
Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say, what the use, were finer optics given, 195
To inspect a mite, not comprehend the
Heaven?

Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonize at every pore?
Or quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain? 200

If Nature thundered in his opening ears,
And stunned him with the music of the
spheres,

How would he wish that Heaven had left
him still

The whispering zephyr and the purling rill?
Who finds not Providence all good and
wise, 205

Alike in what it gives and what denies?

VII. Far as creation's ample range ex-
tends,

The scale of sensual, mental powers ascends.
Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race
From the green myriads in the peopled
grass: 210

What modes of sight betwixt each wide
extreme,

The mole's dim curtain and the lynx's beam:
Of smell, the headlong lioness between
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
Of hearing, from the life that fills the
flood 215

To that which warbles thro' the vernal wood.
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee what sense so subtly true,
From poisonous herbs extracts the healing
dew! 220

How instinct varies in the grovelling swine,
Compared, half-reasoning elephant, with
thine!

'Twixt that and reason what a nice barrier!
For ever separate, yet for ever near!

Remembrance and reflection how allied! ²²⁵
 What thin partitions Sense from Thought
 divide!

And middle natures how they long to join,
 Yet never pass th' insuperable line!
 Without this just gradation could they be
 Subjected these to those, or all to thee! ²³⁰
 The powers of all subdued by thee alone,
 Is not thy Reason all these powers in one?

VIII. See thro' this air, this ocean, and
 this earth

All matter quick, and bursting into birth:
 Above, how high progressive life may go! ²³⁵
 Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
 Vast chain of being! which from God began;
 Natures ethereal, human, angel, man, ²³⁸
 Beast, bird, fish, insect, who no eye can see,
 No glass can reach; from infinite to thee;
 From thee to nothing. — On superior powers
 Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
 Or in the full creation leave a void,
 Where, one step broken, the great scale's
 destroyed:

From Nature's chain whatever link you like,
 Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain
 alike. ²⁴⁶

And if each system in gradation roll,
 Alike essential to th' amazing Whole,
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the Whole must
 fall. ²⁵⁰

Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
 Planets and stars run lawless thro' the sky;
 Let ruling angels from their spheres be
 hurled,
 Being on being wrecked, and world on
 world;
 Heaven's whole foundations to their centre
 nod, ²⁵⁵

And Nature tremble to the throne of God!
 All this dread order break — for whom?
 for thee?

Vile worm! — O madness! pride! impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordained the dust
 to tread,

Or hand to toil, aspired to be the head? ²⁶⁰
 What if the head, the eye, or ear repined
 To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
 Just as absurd for any part to claim
 To be another in this general frame;
 Just as absurd to mourn the tasks or pains
 The great directing Mind of All ordains. ²⁶⁶

All are but parts of one stupendous Whole,
 Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
 That changed thro' all, and yet in all the
 same, ²⁶⁹

Great in the earth as in th' ethereal frame,
 Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,

Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
 Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal
 part, ²⁷⁵

As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
 As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
 As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns.
 To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all!

X. Cease, then, nor Order imperfection
 name; ²⁸¹

Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
 Know thy own point: this kind, this due
 degree

Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on
 thee.

Submit: in this or any other sphere, ²⁸⁵
 Secure to be as blessed as thou canst bear;
 Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
 Or in the natal or the mortal hour.
 All Nature is but Art unknown to thee;
 All chance direction, which thou canst not
 see; ²⁹⁰

All discord, harmony not understood;
 All partial evil, universal good:
 And spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
 One truth is clear, *Whatever is, is right.*

MORAL ESSAYS

EPISTLE IV

TO RICHARD BOYLE,
 EARL OF BURLINGTON

OF THE USE OF RICHES

1731

First published with the title: *Of Taste*. Pope had already exemplified his doctrine that good taste is founded on good sense and on nature in the landscape-gardening of his own villa at Twickenham. His precept and example did much to make fashionable the natural garden as opposed to the formal garden with geometrical patterns. The most brilliant passage of the Essay is the description of "Timon's villa," which exemplifies all that is worst in tasteless magnificence, when the builder has not the good sense to consider usefulness and comfort.

ARGUMENT

The vanity of Expense in people of wealth and quality. The abuse of the word Taste. That the first principle and foundation in this, as in everything else, is Good Sense. The chief proof of it is to follow Nature, even in works of mere luxury and elegance. Instanced in Architecture and Gardening, where all must be adapted to the genius and use of the place, and the beauties not forced into it, but resulting from it. How men are disappointed in their most expensive undertakings for want of this true founda-

tion, without which nothing can please long, if at all; and the best examples and rules will but be perverted into something burdensome and ridiculous. A description of the false taste of Magnificence; the first grand error of which is to imagine that greatness consists in the size and dimension, instead of the proportion and harmony, of the whole; and the second, either in joining together parts incoherent, or too minutely resembling, or, in the repetition of the same too frequently. A word or two of false taste in books, in music, in painting, even in preaching and prayer, and lastly in entertainments. Yet Providence is justified in giving wealth to be squandered in this manner, since it is dispersed to the poor and laborious part of mankind. What are the proper objects of Magnificence, and a proper field for the expense of great men. And, finally, the great and public works which become a Prince.

'Tis strange the Miser should his cares employ

To gain those riches he can ne'er enjoy:
Is it less strange the Prodigal should waste
His wealth to purchase what he ne'er can taste?

Not for himself he sees, or hears, or eats; 5
Artists must choose his pictures, music, meats:

He buys for Topham drawings and designs;
For Pembroke statues, dirty gods, and coins;
Rare monkish manuscripts for Hearne alone,
And books for Mead, and butterflies for Sloane.¹ 10

Think we all these are for himself? no more
Than his fine wife, alas! or finer whore.

For what has Virro painted, built, and planted?

Only to show how many tastes he wanted.
What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste? 15

Some demon whispered, "Visto! have a Taste."

Heaven visits with a Taste the wealthy fool,
And needs no rod but Ripley² with a rule.

See! sportive Fate, to punish awkward pride,
Bids Bubo build, and sends him such a guide: 20

A standing sermon at each year's expense,
That never coxcomb reached Magnificence!

You³ show us Rome was glorious, not profuse,

And pompous buildings once were things of use;

Yet shall, my Lord, your just, your noble rules 25

Fill half the land with imitating fools;
Who random drawings from your sheets shall take,

And of one Beauty many Blunders make;
Load some vain church with old theatric state,

Turn arcs of triumph to a garden gate; 30
Reverse your ornaments, and hang them all
On some patched dog-hole eked with ends of wall,

Then clap four slices of pilaster on 't,
That laced with bits of rustic makes a front;
Shall call the winds thro' long arcades to roar, 35

Proud to catch cold at a Venetian door:
Conscious they act a true Palladian part,
And if they starve, they starve by rules of Art.

Oft have you hinted to your brother peer
A certain truth, which many buy too dear: 40
Something there is more needful than expense,
And something previous even to Taste — 'tis Sense;

Good Sense, which only is the gift of Heaven,
And tho' no science, fairly worth the seven;
A light which in yourself you must perceive; 45

Jones and Le Nôtre¹ have it not to give.
To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
To rear the column, or the arch to bend,
To swell the terrace, or to sink the grot, 50
In all, let Nature never be forgot.

But treat the Goddess like a modest Fair,
Nor overdress, nor leave her wholly bare;
Let not each beauty everywhere be spied,
Where half the skill is decently to hide.
He gains all points who pleasingly con- founds, 55

Surprises, varies, and conceals the bounds.

Consult the genius of the place in all;
That tells the waters or to rise or fall;
Or helps th' ambitious hill the heavens to scale,

Or scoops in circling theatres the vale, 60
Calls in the country, catches opening glades,
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades,

Now breaks, or now directs, th' intending lines;

Paints as you plant, and as you work designs.
Still follow Sense, of every art the soul; 65
Parts answering parts shall slide into a whole,

Spontaneous beauties all around advance,
Start even from difficulty, strike from chance:
Nature shall join you; time shall make it grow

A work to wonder at — perhaps a Stowe.² 70
Without it, proud Versailles! thy glory falls,

¹ Contemporary collectors, scholars, and naturalists.

² An incompetent architect.

³ The Earl of Burlington was then publishing the designs of Inigo Jones and the *Antiquities of Rome* by Palladio. (Pope.)

¹ Landscape-gardener to Louis XIV.

² The seat and gardens of the Lord Viscount Cobham in Buckinghamshire. (Pope.)

And Nero's terraces desert their walls:
 The vast parterres a thousand hands shall
 make,
 Lo! Cobham comes, and floats them with a
 lake;
 Or cut wide views thro' mountains to the
 plain,⁷⁵
 You'll wish your hill or sheltered seat again.
 Even in an ornament its place remark,
 Nor in a hermitage set Dr. Clarke.¹

Behold Villario's ten years' toil complete:
 His quincunx darkens, his espaliers meet,⁸⁰
 The wood supports the plain, the parts unite,
 And strength of shade contends with strength
 of light;

A waving glow the bloomy beds display,
 Blushing in bright diversities of day,⁸⁴
 With silver quivering rills meandered o'er —
 Enjoy them, you! Villario can no more:
 Tired of the scene parterres and fountains
 yield,

He finds at last he better likes a field.

Thro' his young woods how pleased
 Sabinus strayed,

Or sat delighted in the thickening shade,⁹⁰
 With annual joy the reddening shoots to
 greet,

Or see the stretching branches long to meet.
 His son's fine Taste an opener vista loves,
 Foe to the dryads of his father's groves;
 One boundless green or flourished carpet
 views,⁹⁵

With all the mournful family of yews;
 The thriving plants, ignoble broomsticks
 made,

Now sweep those alleys they were born to
 shade.

At Timon's villa² let us pass a day,
 Where all cry out, "What sums are thrown
 away";¹⁰⁰

So proud, so grand; of that stupendous air,
 Soft and agreeable come never there;
 Greatness with Timon dwells in such a
 draught

As brings all Brobdingnag³ before your
 thought.

To compass this, his building is a town,¹⁰⁵
 His pond an ocean, his parterre a down:
 Who but must laugh, the master when he
 sees,

A puny insect shivering at a breeze!
 Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around!
 The whole a labored quarry above ground.
 Two Cupids squirt before: a lake behind¹¹¹

¹ Dr. L. Clarke's busto placed by the Queen in the Hermitage, while the doctor duly frequented the court. (Pope.)

² See note to *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, line 300.

³ The land of giants in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

Improves the keenness of the northern wind.
 His gardens next your admiration call;
 On every side you look, behold the wall!
 No pleasing intricacies intervene;¹¹⁵
 No artful wildness to perplex the scene;
 Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
 And half the platform just reflects the other.
 The suffering eye inverted Nature sees,
 Trees cut to statues, statues thick as trees;
 With here a fountain never to be played,¹²¹
 And there a summer-house that knows no
 shade,

Here Amphitrite sails thro' myrtle bowers,
 There gladiators fight or die in flowers;
 Unwatered, see the drooping seahorse mourn,
 And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty urn.¹²⁶

My Lord advances with majestic mien,
 Smit with the mighty pleasure to be seen:
 But soft! by regular approach — not yet —
 First thro' the length of yon hot terrace
 sweat;¹³⁰

And when up ten steep slopes you've dragged
 your thighs,
 Just at his study door he'll bless your eyes.

His study! with what authors is it stored?
 In books, not authors, curious is my lord.
 To all their dated backs he turns you
 round;¹³⁵

These Aldus printed, those Du Sueil has
 bound;

Lo, some are vellum, and the rest as good,
 For all his lordship knows, — but they are
 wood.

For Locke or Milton 'tis in vain to look;¹³⁹
 These shelves admit not any modern book.

And now the chapel's silver bell you hear,
 That summons you to all the pride of prayer.
 Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
 Make the soul dance upon a jig to Heaven:
 On painted ceilings you devoutly stare,¹⁴⁵
 Where sprawl the saints of Verrio or La-
 guerre,

On gilded clouds in fair expansion lie,
 And bring all paradise before your eye:

To rest, the cushion and soft dean invite,
 Who never mentions Hell to ears polite.¹⁵⁰
 But hark! the chiming clocks to dinner call:
 A hundred footsteps scrape the marble hall;
 The rich buffet well-colored serpents grace,
 And gaping Tritons spew to wash your face.
 Is this a dinner? this a genial room?¹⁵⁵

No, 'tis a temple and a hecatomb;
 A solemn sacrifice performed in state;
 You drink by measure, and to minutes eat.
 So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
 Sancho's¹ dread doctor and his wand were
 there.¹⁶⁰

¹ The squire of Don Quixote.

Between each act the trembling salvers ring,
From soup to sweet wine, and God bless the
King.

In plenty starving, tantalized in state,
And complaisantly helped to all I hate,
Treated, caressed, and tired, I take my
leave, 165

Sick of his civil pride from morn to eve;
I curse such lavish Cost and little Skill,
And swear no day was ever passed so ill.

Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry
fed; 160

Health to himself, and to his infants bread
The laborer bears; what his hard heart denies,
His charitable vanity supplies.

Another age shall see the golden ear
Imbrown the slope, and nod on the parterre,
Deep harvests bury all his pride has planned,
And laughing Ceres reassume the land. 176

Who then shall grace, or who improve the
soil?

Who plants like Bathurst,¹ or who builds
like Boyle?²

'Tis use alone that sanctifies expense,
And splendor borrows all her rays from
sense. 180

His father's acres who enjoys in peace,
Or makes his neighbors glad if he increase;
Whose cheerful tenants bless their yearly toil,
Yet to their Lord owe more than to the soil;
Whose ample lawns are not ashamed to
feed 185

The milky heifer and deserving steed;
Whose rising forests, not for pride or show,
But future buildings, future navies, grow:

Let his plantations stretch from down to
down,

First shade a country, and then raise a
town. 190

You, too, proceed! make falling arts your
care;

Erect new wonders, and the old repair;
Jones and Palladio to themselves restore
And be whate'er Vitruvius³ was before,
Till kings call forth th' ideas of your mind 195
(Proud to accomplish what such hands de-
signed),

Bid harbors open, public ways extend,
Bid temples, worthier of the God, ascend,
Bid the broad arch the dangerous flood con-
tain,

The mole projected break the roaring main,
Back to his bounds their subject sea com-
mand, 201

And roll obedient rivers thr' the land.

¹ The Third Epistle of the Moral Essays was ad-
dressed to Allen, Lord Bathurst.

² Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington.

³ Latin writer on architecture, first century B.C.

These honors Peace to happy Britain
brings;

These are imperial works, and worthy Kings.

EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT

BEING THE PROLOGUE TO THE SATIRES

Dr. John Arbuthnot, who had been physician in ordinary to Queen Anne, was a man of literary and artistic tastes and a most charming gentleman, the close friend of Pope and of Swift. To him Pope addresses what is the most intimate and self-revealing of his poems, published in 1735, and later used as prologue to the collected volume of Pope's *Satires*. It is in a measure Pope's literary autobiography, written at the height of his power and of his fame, his *apologia pro vita sua*, in which he seeks to justify his own position and to dispose once for all of his enemies and detractors. The most famous passage is the "character" of Addison under the name of "Atticus," a satirical portrait which, admitting the greatness of Addison, seizes on and emphasizes the victim's weaker side — his timid jealousy of rivals and a certain smug self-complacency. This portrait is much greater satire than the vindictive "character" of Lord Hervey under the name of "Sporus." Many lines contain thinly veiled references to men and events familiar to Pope's contemporaries, but long since forgotten, save as Pope has given to them a sort of immortality by his satire. The modern reader, unless he is prepared to wade through a mass of annotations, must be content to miss the point of many of these personal thrusts. In easy colloquial grace and terseness of epigram the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* shows Pope at his best.

ADVERTISEMENT

This paper is a sort of bill of complaint, begun many years since, and drawn up by snatches, as the several occasions offered. I had no thoughts of publishing it, till it pleased some Persons of Rank and Fortune (the authors of "Verses to the Imitator of Horace," and of an "Epistle to a Doctor of Divinity from a Nobleman at Hampton Court") to attack, in a very extraordinary manner, not only my Writings (of which, being public, the Public is judge), but my Person, Morals, and Family; whereof, to those who know me not, a truer information may be requisite. Being divided between the necessity to say something of myself, and my own laziness to undertake so awkward a task, I thought it the shortest way to put the last hand to this epistle. If it have any thing pleasing, it will be that by which I am most desirous to please, the Truth and the Sentiment; and if any thing offensive, it will be only to those I am least sorry to offend, the vicious or the ungenerous.

Many will know their own pictures in it, there being not a circumstance but what is true; but I have, for the most part, spared their names, and they may escape being laughed at if they please.

I would have some of them know it was owing to the request of the learned and candid Friend to whom it is inscribed, that I make not as free use of theirs as they have done of mine. However, I shall have this advantage and honor on my side, that whereas, by their proceeding, any abuse may be directed at any man, no injury can possibly be done by mine, since a nameless character can never be found out but by its truth and likeness.

P. "Shut, shut the door, good John!"¹
 fatigued, I said;
 "Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead."
 The Dog-star rages! nay, 'tis past a doubt
 All Bedlam² or Parnassus is let out:
 Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand, 5
 They rave, recite, and madden round the
 land.

What walls can guard me, or what shades
 can hide?

They pierce my thickets, thro' my grot they
 glide,

By land, by water, they renew the charge,
 They stop the chariot, and they board the
 barge. 10

No place is sacred, not the church is free,
 Even Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me:
 Then from the Mint³ walks forth the man of
 rhyme,

Happy to catch me just at dinner time.

Is there a Parson much bemused in beer,
 A maudlin Poetess, a rhyming Peer, 16
 A clerk foredoomed his father's soul to cross,
 Who pens a stanza when he should engross?
 Is there who, locked from ink and paper,
 scrawls

With desperate charcoal round his darkened
 walls? 20

All fly to TWIT'NAM⁴ and in humble strain,
 Apply to me to keep them mad or vain.
 Arthur, whose giddy son neglects the laws,
 Imputes to me and my damned works the
 cause:

Poor Cornus sees his frantic wife elope, 25
 And curses Wit and Poetry, and Pope.

Friend to my life (which did not you pro-
 long,

The world had wanted many an idle song)!
 What Drop or Nostrum can this plague re-
 move?

Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or
 love? 30

A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped;
 If foes, they write, if friends, they read me
 dead.

Seized and tied down to judge, how wretched
 I!

Who can't be silent, and who will not lie.
 To laugh were want of goodness and of
 grace, 35

And to be grave exceeds all power of face.

I sit with sad civility, I read

With honest anguish and an aching head,

And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
 This saving counsel, "Keep your piece nine
 years." 40

"Nine years!" cries he, who, high in Drury
 lane,

Lulled by soft zephyrs thro' the broken pane,
 Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before
 Term¹ ends,

Obliged by hunger and request of friends:
 "The piece, you think, is incorrect? why,
 take it! 45

I'm all submission: what you'd have it—
 make it."

Three things another's modest wishes
 bound,

"My friendship, and a Prologue, and ten
 pound."

Pitholeon sends to me: "You know his
 Grace,

I want a patron; ask him for a place." 50
 Pitholeon libelled me — "But here's a letter
 Informs you, Sir, 'twas when he knew no
 better.

Dare you refuse him? Curll² invites to dine,
 He'll write a *Journal*, or he'll turn Divine."
 Bless me! a packet. — 'Tis a stranger sues,
 A Virgin Tragedy, an Orphan Muse. 56

If I dislike it, "Furies, death, and rage!"
 If I approve, "Commend it to the stage."
 There (thank my stars) my whole commis-
 sion ends,

The players and I are, luckily, no friends. 60
 Fired that the house rejects him, "Sdeath,
 I'll print it,

And shame the fools — your interest, Sir,
 with Lintot." 3

Lintot, dull rogue, will think your price too
 much:

"Not, Sir, if you revise it, and retouch."

All my demurs but double his attacks; 65

At last he whispers, "Do, and we go snacks."

Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door;

"Sir, let me see your works and you no
 more."

'Tis sung, when Midas' ears began to
 spring

(Midas, a sacred person and a king), 70

His very Minister who spied them first

(Some say his Queen) was forced to speak or
 burst.

And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
 When every coxcomb perks them in my face?

A. Good friend, forbear! you deal in
 dangerous things; 75

I'd never name Queens, Ministers, or Kings;

¹ Pope's servant.

² The great London hospital for the insane.

³ A region of London in which debtors could not be ar-
 rested. No debtors could be arrested on Sunday.

⁴ Pope's villa was at Twickenham, on the banks of the
 Thames not far from London.

¹ The London "season."

² The piratical bookseller who published Pope's letters.

³ One of the most respected booksellers of the day. He
 published Pope's Homer.

Keep close to ears, and those let asses prick,
'Tis nothing — *P.* Nothing! if they bite
and kick?

Out with it, DUNCIAD! let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he's an ass: 80
The truth once told (and wherefore should
we lie?)

The Queen of Midas slept, and so may I.

You think this cruel? take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.

Let peals of laughter, Codrus! round thee
break, 85
Thou unconcerned canst hear the mighty
crack:

Pit, Box, and Gallery in convulsions hurled,
Thou stand'st unshook amidst a bursting
world.

Who shames a Scribbler? break one cobweb
thro',

He spins the slight self-pleasing thread
anew: 90

Destroy his fib, or sophistry — in vain!

The creature's at his dirty work again,
Throned in the centre of his thin designs,
Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines.

Whom have I hurt? has Poet yet or Peer 95

Lost the arched eyebrow or Parnassian sneer?

And has not Colley still his lord and whore?

His butchers Henley? his freemasons Moore?

Does not one table Bavus still admit?

Still to one Bishop Philips seem a wit? 100

Still Sappho — *A.* Hold! for God's sake —

you'll offend.
No names — be calm — learn prudence of a
friend.

I too could write, and I am twice as tall;
But foes like these — *P.* One flatterer's
worse than all.

Of all mad creatures, if the learned are
right, 105

It is the slaver kills, and not the bite.

A fool quite angry is quite innocent:

Alas! 'tis ten times worse when they repent.

One dedicates in high heroic prose,

And ridicules beyond a hundred foes; 110

One from all Grub-street will my fame defend,

And, more abusive, calls himself my friend:

This prints my *Letters*, that expects a bribe,

And others roar aloud, "Subscribe, sub-
scribe!"

There are who to my person pay their
court: 115

I cough like Horace; and tho' lean, am short;

Ammon's great son¹ one shoulder had too
high,

Such Ovid's nose, and "Sir! you have an
eye —"

¹ Alexander the Great.

Go on, obliging creatures! make me see
All that disgraced my betters met in me. 120
Say, for my comfort, languishing in bed,
"Just so immortal Maro² held his head":

And when I die, be sure you let me know
Great Homer died three thousand years ago.

Why did I write? what sin to me un-
known 125

Dipped me in ink, my parents', or my own?

As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,

I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came:

I left no calling for this idle trade,

No duty broke, no father disobeyed: 130

The Muse but served to ease some friend, not
wife,

To help me thro' this long disease my life,

To second, ARBUTHNOT! thy art and care,

And teach the being you preserved, to bear.

A. But why then publish? *P.* Granville³
the polite, 135

And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could
write;

Well-natured Garth inflamed with early
praise,

And Congreve loved, and Swift endured my
lays;

The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield, read;

Even mitred Rochester would nod the
head, 140

And St. John's self (great Dryden's friends
before)

With open arms received one poet more.

Happy my studies, when by these approved!

Happier their author, when by these beloved!

From these the world will judge of men and
books, 145

Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and
Cokes.³

Soft were my numbers; who could take
offence

While pure description held the place of
sense?

Like gentle Fanny's was my flowery theme,

"A painted mistress, or a purling stream."

Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill; 152

I wished the man a dinner, and sat still:

Yet then did Dennis⁴ rave in furious fret;

I never answered; I was not in debt.

If want provoked, or madness made them
print, 155

I waged no war with Bedlam or the Mint.

Did some more sober critic come abroad;

If wrong, I smiled, if right, I kissed the rod.

¹ Virgil.

² The men mentioned in lines 135-140 were wits and critics of the preceding generation, who encouraged Pope in his boyhood and youth.

³ Authors of secret and scandalous history. (Pope.)

⁴ A well-known literary critic, who had attacked Pope's *Essay on Criticism*.

Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and
sense. 160

Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite.
Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel graced these

ribalds,
From slashing Bentleys down to piddling
Tibbalds.¹

Each wight who reads not, and but scans and
spells, 165

Each word-catcher that lives on syllables,
Even such small critics some regard may
claim,

Preserved in Milton's or in Shakespeare's
name.

Pretty! in amber to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or
worms! 170

The things, we know, are neither rich nor
rare,

But wonder how the devil they got there.

Were others angry: I excused them too;
Well might they rage, I gave them but their
due.

A man's true merit 'tis not hard to find; 175
But each man's secret standard in his mind,
That casting-weight Pride adds to emptiness,
This, who can gratify? for who can guess?

The bard whom pilfered pastorals renown,
Who turns a Persian tale for half-a-
crown, 180

Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains from hard-bound brains eight
lines a year;

He who, still wanting, tho' he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing
left;

And he who now to sense, now nonsense,
leaning, 185

Means not, but blunders round about a
meaning:

And he whose fustian 's so sublimely bad,
It is not poetry, but prose run mad:

All these my modest satire bade translate,
And owned that nine such poets made a
Tate.² 190

How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and
chafe!

And swear not ADDISON himself was safe.

Peace to all such! but were there one ³
whose fires

True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires,
Blessed with each talent and each art to
please, 195

¹ Editors of Milton and of Shakespeare whom Pope had
satirized in the *Dunciad*.

² Nahum Tate, the poet laureate.

³ Addison, satirized under the name of "Atticus."

And born to write, converse, and live with
ease;

Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the
throne;

View him with scornful, yet with jealous
eyes,

And hate for arts that caused himself to
rise; 200

Damn with faint praise, assent with civil
leer,

And without sneering teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;

Alike reserved to blame or to commend, 205
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;

Dreading even fools; by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;

Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause: 210

While Wits and Templars ¹ every sentence
raise,

And wonder with a foolish face of praise —
Who but must laugh if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?

What tho' my name stood rubric ² on the
walls, 215

Or plastered posts, with claps, ³ in capitals?
Or smoking forth, a hundred hawkers load,

On wings of winds came flying all abroad?
I sought no homage from the race that write;

I kept, like Asian Monarchs, from their
sight: 220

Poems I heeded (now berhymed so long)
No more than thou, great George! ⁴ a birth-
day song.

I ne'er with Wits or Witlings passed my days
To spread about the itch of verse and praise;

Nor like a puppy daggled thro' the town 225
To fetch and carry sing-song up and down;

Nor at rehearsals sweat, and mouthed, and
cried,

With handkerchief and orange at my side;
But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,

To Bufo left the whole Castalian state. 230

Proud as Apollo on his forked hill
Sat full-blown Bufo, puffed by every quill:

Fed with soft dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.

His library (where busts of poets dead, 235
And a true Pindar stood without a head)

Received of Wits an undistinguished race,
Who first his judgment asked, and then a
place:

Much they extolled his pictures, much his
seat,

¹ law-students.

² in red letters.

³ posters.

⁴ King George II was utterly indifferent to literature.

And flattered every day, and some days
eat: 240

Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some
with praise;

To some a dry rehearsal was assigned,
And others (harder still) he paid in kind.¹
Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not
nigh; 245

Dryden alone escaped this judging eye:
But still the great have kindness in reserve;
He helped to bury whom he helped to starve.
May some choice patron bless each gray
goose quill!

May every Bavius² have his Bufo still! 250
So when a statesman wants a day's defence,
Or Envy holds a whole week's war with
Sense,

Or simple Pride for flattery makes demands,
May dunces by dunces be whistled off my
hands!

Blessed be the great! for those they take
away, 255

And those they left me — for they left me
Gay;³

Left me to see neglected Genius bloom,
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb:
Of all thy blameless life the sole return
My Verse, and Queensbury weeping o'er thy
urn! 260

Oh let me live my own, and die so too
(To live and die is all I have to do)!
Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,
And see what friends, and read what books I
please;

Above a Patron, tho' I condescend 265
Sometimes to call a minister my Friend.
I was not born for courts or great affairs;
I pay my debts, believe, and say my prayers;
Can sleep without a poem in my head,
Nor know if Dennis be alive or dead. 270

Why am I asked what next shall see the
light?

Heavens! was I born for nothing but to write?
Has life no joys for me? or (to be grave)
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save?
"I found him close with Swift" — "Indeed?
no doubt 275

(Cries prating Balbus) something will come
out."

'Tis all in vain, deny it as I will;
"No, such a genius never can lie still":
And then for mine obligingly mistakes 279
The first lampoon Sir Will or Bubo makes.
Poor guiltless I! and can I choose but smile,

¹ i.e., with poems of his own.

² i.e., every bad poet.

³ Author of the *Beggar's Opera*, and close friend of Pope.

When every coxcomb knows me by my style?

Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give Virtue scandal, Innocence a fear, 285
Or from the soft-eyed virgin steal a tear!
But he who hurts a harmless neighbor's
peace,

Insults fallen Worth, or Beauty in distress,
Who loves a lie, lame Slander helps about,
Who writes a libel, or who copies out; 290
That fop whose pride affects a patron's name,
Yet absent, wounds an author's honest fame;
Who can your merit selfishly approve,
And show the sense of it without the love;
Who has the vanity to call you friend, 295
Yet wants the honor, injured, to defend;
Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you
say,

And, if he lie not, must at least betray;
Who to the Dean and Silver Bell can swear,
And sees at Canons what was never there;¹
Who reads but with a lust to misapply, 301
Make satire a lampoon, and fiction lie:
A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his
stead.

Let Sporus² tremble — A. What? that
thing of silk, 305
Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?

P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded
wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and
stings; 310

Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet Wit ne'er tastes, and Beauty ne'er en-
joys;

So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray, 315
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way,
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet
squeaks,

Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies, 321
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies;
His wit all see-saw between *that* and *this*, }
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss, }
And he himself one vile Antithesis. 325 }
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,

¹ The account of "Timon's Villa" in the fourth *Moral Essay* (lines 99–168) was declared by Pope's enemies to be a satire on Canons, the country seat of the Duke of Chandos, where Pope had been entertained as a guest.

² Lord Hervey, a well-known court favorite, and one of Pope's bitter enemies. The name Sporus is that of a eunuch, a favorite of the Emperor Nero.

The trifling head, or the corrupted heart;
 Pop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
 Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
 Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have ex-
 prest, 330

A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;
 Beauty that shocks you, Parts that none will
 trust,
 Wit that can creep, and Pride that licks the
 dust.

Not Fortune's worshipper, nor Fashion's
 fool,

Not Lucre's madman, nor Ambition's tool,
 Not proud nor servile;—be one poet's
 praise, 336

That if he pleased, he pleased by manly ways:
 That flattery even to Kings, he held a shame,
 And thought a lie in verse or prose the same;
 That not in fancy's maze he wandered long, 340
 But stooped to truth, and moralized his song;
 That not for Fame, but Virtue's better end,
 He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
 The damning critic, half approving wit,
 The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit; 345
 Laughed at the loss of friends he never had,
 The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad;
 The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
 The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed;
 The tale revived, the lie so oft o'erthrown, 350
 Th' imputed trash and dulness not his own;
 The morals blackened when the writings
 'scape,

The libelled person, and the pictured shape;
 Abuse on all he loved, or loved him, spread,
 A friend in exile, or a father dead; 355
 The whisper, that, to greatness still too near,
 Perhaps yet vibrates on his SOVEREIGN'S ear—
 Welcome for thee, fair Virtue! all the past:
 For thee, fair Virtue! welcome even the last!

A. But why insult the poor? affront the
 great? 360

P. A knave's a knave to me in every state;
 Alike my scorn, if he succeed or fail,
 Sporus at court, or Japhet in a jail;
 A hiring scribbler, or a hiring peer,
 Knight of the post corrupt, or of the shire; 365
 If on a Pillory, or near a Throne,
 He gain his prince's ear, or lose his own.

Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
 Sappho can tell you how this man was bit:
 This dreaded Satirist Dennis will confess 370
 Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress:
 So humble, he has knocked at Tibbald's door,
 Has drunk with Cibber, nay, has rhymed for
 Moore.

Full ten years slandered, did he once reply?
 Three thousand suns went down on Wel-
 sted's lie. 375

To please a mistress one aspersed his life;
 He lashed him not, but let her be his wife:
 Let Budgell charge low Grub-street on his
 quill,

And write whate'er he pleased, except his will;
 Let the two Curlls of town and court
 abuse 380

His father, mother, body, soul, and muse:
 Yet why? that father held it for a rule,
 It was a sin to call our neighbor fool;
 That harmless mother thought no wife a
 whore:

Hear this, and spare his family, James
 Moore! 385

Unspotted names, and memorable long,
 If there be force in Virtue, or in Song.

Of gentle blood (part shed in honor's cause,
 While yet in Britain honor had applause)
 Each parent sprung — A. What fortune,
 pray? —

P. Their own; 390
 And better got than Bestia's from the throne.
 Born to no pride, inheriting no strife,
 Nor marrying discord in a noble wife,¹
 Stranger to civil and religious rage,
 The good man walked innocuous thro' his
 age. 395

No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
 Nor dared an oath, nor hazarded a lie.
 Unlearned, he knew no schoolman's subtle art,
 No language but the language of the heart.
 By Nature honest, by Experience wise, 400
 Healthy by Temperance and by Exercise;
 His life, tho' long, to sickness passed unknown,
 His death was instant and without a groan.
 O grant me thus to live, and thus to die!
 Who sprung from kings shall know less joy
 than I. 405

O friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!
 Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:
 Me, let the tender office long engage
 To rock the cradle of reposing Age,
 With lenient arts extend a Mother's breath,
 Make Languor smile, and smooth the bed
 of Death; 411

Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
 And keep a while one parent from the sky!²
 On cares like these if length of days attend,
 May Heaven, to bless those days, preserve
 my friend! 415

Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
 And just as rich as when he served a Queen.

A. Whether that blessing be denied or
 given,
 Thus far was right;—the rest belongs to
 Heaven.

¹ Addison married the Countess of Warwick.

² Pope was a devoted son to his aged mother.

JOHN GAY (1685-1732)

John Gay has been called the "spoiled child of the Queen Anne wits." Swift and Pope and Dr. Arbuthnot were his devoted friends, and continually gave him literary advice and financial assistance. His first important poem, *Rural Sports* (1713), was dedicated to Mr. Pope. Then at Pope's suggestion he wrote *The Shepherd's Week*, a set of pastorals which substitutes for the conventional shepherds and shepherdesses usual in the artificial pastoral the actual country folk of rural England. For the best of his longer poems, *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716), which treats with the mock seriousness of the didactic poem the bustling life of the great city, Gay received "several hints" from Swift. In 1720, he published by subscription his collected poems. From this edition he made about a thousand pounds, which he promptly lost by speculating in South Sea stock. In 1727 was published the first series of *Fables*. (A second series appeared five years after his death.)

The great success of Gay's life came in 1728 with the production of the *Beggar's Opera*, written at the suggestion of Swift, and with the counsel of Pope and Arbuthnot. This brilliantly witty musical farce of criminal life, in which the chief criminal is the satiric counterpart of Sir Robert Walpole, the great Whig minister, had the extraordinary run of sixty-two nights. Its sequel, *Polly*, prohibited by the censor because of its political satire, was printed in 1729 and brought its author a thousand pounds. In the songs written for his operas, Gay shows a lyrical power which in vivacious light-hearted gayety rivals that of the great Elizabethan song-writers.

Gay died at the age of forty-seven, and was given a public funeral in Westminster Abbey. On his tomb is cut a graceful tribute composed by Pope, which is followed by the famous epitaph written by Gay himself —

Life is a jest, and all things show it,
I thought so once, and now I know it.

Most of his writing is in the spirit of jest — the playful wit of *Trivia* and the *Fables*, the rollicking satire of the *Beggar's Opera*. His poetical style is always easy and graceful, but it never pretends to the manner of great poetry.

The best edition of Gay is that edited by G. C. Faber for the Oxford Edition of Standard Authors (1926). His life has been written by Lewis Melville (London, 1921).

TRIVIA, OR THE ART OF WALKING THE STREETS OF LONDON

1716

Trivia, from the Latin *trivium* (*ter* + *via*), where three roads meet, is an epithet describing one of the aspects of the goddess Diana. *Diana Trivia* is "Diana of the Crossways," and hence an appropriate patroness for the "art of walking the streets." Book I deals with "the Implements for walking the Streets, and the Signs of the Weather." The following passages are selected from the second and third books.

BOOK II

OF WALKING THE STREETS BY DAY

Thus far the Muse has traced in useful lays,
The proper implements for wintry ways;
Has taught the walker, with judicious eyes,
To read the various warnings of the skies.
Now venture, Muse, from home, to range the
town,⁵
And for the public safety risk thy own.

The Morning

For ease and for dispatch the morning's
best;
No tides of passengers the street molest.

You'll see a draggled damsel, here and there,
From Billingsgate her fishy traffic bear; 10
On doors the sallow milk-maid chalks her
gains;

Ah! how unlike the milk-maid of the plains!
Before proud gates attending asses bray,
Or arrogate with solemn pace the way;
These grave physicians with their milky
cheer 15

The love-sick maid and dwindling beau
repair; 1

Here rows of drummers stand in martial file,
And with their vellom thunder shake the pile,
To greet the new-made bride. Are sounds
like these

The proper prelude to a state of peace? 20
Now industry awakes her busy sons,
Full charged with news the breathless hawker
runs;

Shops open, coaches roll, carts shake the
ground,

And all the streets with passing cries resound.

Of Narrow Streets

Though expedition bids, yet never stray 25
Where no ranged posts defend the rugged way.

1 The milk of asses was a fashionable remedy for the ailing.

Here laden carts with thundering wagons
meet,
Wheels clash with wheels, and bar the
narrow street;

The lashing whip resounds, the horses strain,
And blood in anguish bursts the swelling
vein. ³⁰

O barbarous men, your cruel breasts assuage,
Why vent ye on the generous steed your
rage?

Does not his service earn your daily bread?
Your wives, your children by his labors fed!
If, as the Samian ¹ taught, the soul revives,
And, shifting seats, in other bodies lives; ³⁶
Severe shall be the brutal coachman's
change,

Doomed in a hackney horse the town to
range:

Carmen, transformed, the groaning load
shall draw, ³⁹

Whom other tyrants with the lash shall awe.

The Pell-mell Celebrated

O bear me to the paths of fair Pell-mell,
Safe are thy pavements, grateful is thy
smell!

At distance rolls along the gilded coach,
Nor sturdy carmen on thy walks encroach;
No lets would bar thy ways were chairs de-
nied ⁴⁵

The soft supports of laziness and pride;
Shops breathe perfumes, thro' sashes ribbons
glow,

The mutual arms of ladies, and the beau.
Yet still even here, when rains the passage
hide,

Oft the loose stone spirts up a muddy tide ⁵⁰
Beneath thy careless foot; and from on high,
Where masons mount the ladder, fragments
fly;

Mortar, and crumbled lime in showers de-
scend,

And o'er thy head destructive tiles impend.

The Pleasure of Walking through an Alley

But sometimes let me leave the noisy
roads, ⁵⁵

And silent wander in the close abodes
Where wheels ne'er shake the ground; there
pensive stray,

In studious thought, the long uncrowded
way.

Here I remark each walker's different face,
And in their look their various business
trace. ⁶⁰

The broker here his spacious beaver wears,
Upon his brow sit jealousies and cares;
Bent on some mortgage (to avoid reproach)
He seeks bye streets, and saves th' expensive
coach.

Soft, at low doors, old lechers tap their cane,
For fair recluse, who travels Drury-lane; ⁶⁶
Here rooms uncombed the lavish rake, to
shun

His Fleet-street draper's everlasting dun.

The Dangers of Foot-ball

Where Covent-Garden's famous temple
stands,

That boasts the work of Jones' ¹ immortal
hands; ⁷⁰

Columns with plain magnificence appear,
And graceful porches lead along the square:
Here oft my course I bend, when lo! from far
I spy the furies of the foot-ball war:

The 'prentice quits his shop, to join the crew,
Increasing crowds the flying game pursue. ⁷⁶
Thus, as you roll the ball o'er snowy ground,
The gathering globe augments with every
round.

But whither shall I run? the throng draws
nigh,

The ball now skims the street, now soars on
high; ⁸⁰

The dexterous glazier strong returns the
bound,

And jingling sashes on the pent-house sound.

BOOK III

OF WALKING THE STREETS BY NIGHT

O Trivia, Goddess, leave these low abodes,
And traverse o'er the wide ethereal roads,
Celestial Queen, put on thy robes of light,
Now Cynthia ² named, fair regent of the
night.

At sight of thee the villain sheaths his sword,
Nor scales the wall, to steal the wealthy
hoard. ⁶

O may thy silver lamp from heaven's high
bower

Direct my footsteps in the midnight hour!

Of Pick-Pockets

Where the mob gathers, swiftly shoot
along,

Nor idly mingle in the noisy throng. ¹⁰

Lured by the silver hilt, amid the swarm,
The subtil artist will thy side disarm.

¹ Pythagoras, who taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

¹ Inigo Jones (1573-1652), the famous architect.
² Diana as the Moon.

Nor is thy flaxen wig with safety worn;
 High on the shoulder, in a basket born,
 Lurks the sly boy; whose hand to rapine
 bred, ¹⁵
 Plucks off the curling honors of thy head.
 Here dives the skulking thief with practised
 slight,
 And unfelt fingers make thy pocket light.
 Where's now thy watch, with all its trinkets,
 flown?
 And thy late snuff-box is no more thy own.
 But lo! his bolder theft some tradesman
 spies, ²¹
 Swift from his prey the scudding lurcher ¹
 flies;
 Dexterous he 'scapes the coach with nimble
 bounds,
 Whilst every honest tongue "stop thief"
 resounds.
 So speeds the wily fox, alarmed by fear, ²⁵
 Who lately filched the turkey's callow care;
 Hounds following hounds grow louder as he
 flies,
 And injured tenants join the hunter's cries.
 Breathless he stumbling falls: Ill-fated boy!
 Why did not honest work thy youth employ?
 Seized by rough hands, he's dragged amid the
 rout, ³¹
 And stretched beneath the pump's incessant
 spout:
 Or plunged in miry ponds, he gasping lies,
 Mud chokes his mouth, and plasters o'er his
 eyes.

Of Crossing the Street

If wheels bar up the road, where streets are
 crost, ³⁵
 With gentle words the coachman's ear accost:
 He ne'er the threat, or harsh command obeys,
 But with contempt the spattered shoe
 surveys.
 Now man with utmost fortitude thy soul,
 To cross the way where carts and coaches
 roll; ⁴⁰
 Yet do not in thy hardy skill confide,
 Nor rashly risk the kennel's ² spacious stride;
 Stay till afar the distant wheel you hear,
 Like dying thunder in the breaking air;
 Thy foot will slide upon the miry stone, ⁴⁵
 And passing coaches crush thy tortured bone,
 Or wheels enclose the road; on either hand
 Pent round with perils, in the midst you
 stand,
 And call for aid in vain; the coachman
 swears,
 And car-men drive, unmindful of thy prayers.

¹ thief.

² gutter.

Where wilt thou turn? ah! whither wilt thou
 fly? ⁵¹
 On every side the pressing spokes are nigh.
 So sailors, while Carybdis' gulf they shun,
 Amazed, on Scylla's craggy dangers run.

Of Watchmen

Yet there are watchmen, who with friendly
 light ⁵⁵
 Will teach thy reeling steps to tread aright;
 For sixpence will support thy helpless arm,
 And home conduct thee, safe from nightly
 harm;
 But if they shake their lanthorns, from afar
 To call their brethren to confederate war ⁶⁰
 When rakes resist their power; if hapless you
 Should chance to wander with the scouring ¹
 crew;
 Though fortune yield thee captive, ne'er
 despair,
 But seek the constable's considerate ear;
 He will reverse the watchman's harsh decree,
 Moved by the rhetoric of a silver fee. ⁶⁶
 Thus would you gain some favorite courtier's
 word;
 Fee not the petty clerks, but bribe my Lord.

SWEET WILLIAM'S FAREWELL
 TO BLACK-EYED SUSAN

A BALLAD

I

All in the Downs² the fleet was moored,
 The streamers waving in the wind,
 When black-eyed Susan came aboard.
 "Oh! where shall I my true love find!
 Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true, ⁵
 If my sweet William sails among the crew."

2

William, who high upon the yard,
 Rocked with the billow to and fro,
 Soon as her well-known voice he heard,
 He sighed and cast his eyes below: ¹⁰
 The cord slides swiftly through his glowing
 hands,
 And (quick as lightning), on the deck he
 stands.

3

So the sweet lark, high-poised in air,
 Shuts close his pinions to his breast,
 (If, chance, his mate's shrill call he
 hear) ¹⁵

¹ roistering.

² A roadstead off the coast of Kent.

And drops at once into her nest.
The noblest captain in the British fleet,
Might envy William's lip those kisses sweet.

4

"O Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My vows shall ever true remain; 20
Let me kiss off that falling tear,
We only part to meet again.
Change, as ye list, ye winds; my heart shall be
The faithful compass that still points to thee.

5

"Believe not what the landmen say, 25
Who tempt with doubts thy constant
mind:
They'll tell thee, sailors, when away,
In every port a mistress find.
Yes, yes, believe them when they tell thee so,
For thou art present wheresoe'er I go. 30

6

"If to far India's coast we sail,
Thy eyes are seen in diamonds bright,
Thy breath is Africk's spicy gale,
Thy skin is ivory, so white.
Thus every beauteous object that I view, 35
Wakes in my soul some charm of lovely Sue.

7

"Though battle call me from thy arms,
Let not my pretty Susan mourn;
Though cannons roar, yet safe from
harms,
William shall to his Dear return. 40
Love turns aside the balls that round me fly,
Lest precious tears should drop from Susan's
eye."

8

The boatswain gave the dreadful word,
The sails their swelling bosom spread,
No longer must she stay aboard: 45
They kissed, she sighed, he hung his
head;
Her lessening boat, unwilling rows to land:
Adieu, she cries! and waved her lily hand.

Publ. 1720.

FABLES

1727

THE MONKEY WHO HAD SEEN THE
WORLD¹

A Monkey, to reform the times,
Resolved to visit foreign climes;

¹ Fable xiv, First Series.

For men in distant regions roam
To bring politer manners home:
So forth he fares, all toil defies; 5
Misfortune serves to make us wise.

At length the treacherous snare was laid,
Poor Pug was caught, to town conveyed,
There sold; (How envied was his doom,
Made captive in a lady's room!) 10
Proud as a lover of his chains,
He day by day her favor gains.
Whene'er the duty of the day,
The toilette calls; with mimic play
He twirls her knots, he cracks her fan, 15
Like any other gentleman.

In visits too his parts and wit,
When jests grew dull, were sure to hit.
Proud with applause, he thought his mind
In every courtly art refined, 20
Like Orpheus burned with public zeal,
To civilize the monkey weal;
So watched occasion, broke his chain,
And sought his native woods again.

The hairy sylvans round him press, 25
Astonished at his strut and dress,
Some praise his sleeve, and others gloat
Upon his rich embroidered coat,
His dapper periwig commending
With the black tail behind depending, 30
His powdered back, above, below,
Like hoary frosts, or fleecy snow;
But all, with envy and desire,
His fluttering shoulder-knot admire.

"Hear and improve," he pertly cries, 35
"I come to make a nation wise;
Weigh your own worth; support your place,
The next in rank to human race.
In cities long I passed my days,
Conversed with men, and learnt their
ways: 40

Their dress, their courtly manners see;
Reform your state, and copy me.
Seek ye to thrive? In flattery deal,
Your scorn, your hate, with that conceal;
Seem only to regard your friends, 45
But use them for your private ends,
Stint not to truth the flow of wit,
Be prompt to lie, whene'er 'tis fit;
Bend all your force to spatter merit;
Scandal is conversation's spirit; 50
Boldly to every thing pretend,
And men your talents shall commend;
I knew the Great. Observe me right,
So shall you grow like man polite."

He spoke and bowed. With muttering
jaws 55

The wondering circle grinned applause.
Now, warm with malice, envy, spite,
Their most obliging friends they bite,

And fond to copy human ways,
Practise new mischiefs all their days. 60

Thus the dull lad, too tall for school,
With travel finishes the fool,
Studious of every coxcomb's airs,
He drinks, games, dresses, whores, and
swears,

O'erlooks with scorn all virtuous arts, 65
For vice is fitted to his parts.

THE FOX AT THE POINT OF DEATH *

A Fox, in life's extreme decay,
Weak, sick and faint, expiring lay;
All appetite had left his maw,
And age disarmed his mumbling jaw.
His numerous race around him stand 5
To learn their dying sire's command;
He raised his head with whining moan,
And thus was heard the feeble tone.

"Ah sons, from evil ways depart,
My crimes lie heavy on my heart. 10
See, see, the murdered geese appear!
Why are those bleeding turkeys there?
Why all around this cackling train,
Who haunt my ears for chicken slain?"

The hungry foxes round them stared, 15
And for the promised feast prepared.

"Where, Sir, is all this dainty cheer?
Nor turkey, goose, nor hen is here:
These are the phantoms of your brain,
And your sons lick their lips in vain." 20

"O gluttons," says the drooping sire,
"Restrain inordinate desire;
Your liquorish ² taste you shall deplore,
When peace of conscience is no more.
Does not the hound betray our pace, 25
And gins and guns destroy our race?
Thieves dread the searching eye of power,
And never feel the quiet hour.
Old-age, (which few of us shall know,)
Now puts a period to my woe. 30
Would you true happiness attain,
Let honesty your passions rein;
So live in credit and esteem,
And, the good name you lost, redeem."

"The counsel's good," a fox replies, 35
"Could I perform what you advise.
Think, what our ancestors have done;
A line of thieves from son to son;
To us descends the long disgrace,
And infamy hath marked our race. 40
Though we, like harmless sheep, should feed,
Honest in thought, in word, and deed,
Whatever hen-roost is decreased,
We shall be thought to share the feast.

The change shall never be believed, 45
A lost good name is ne'er retrieved."
"Nay then," replies the feeble Fox,
"(But, hark! I hear a hen that clocks)
Go, but be moderate in your food;
A chicken too might do me good." 50

THE HARE AND MANY FRIENDS *

Friendship, like love, is but a name,
Unless to one you stint the flame,
The child, whom many fathers share,
Hath seldom known a father's care;
'Tis thus in friendships; who depend 5
On many, rarely find a friend.

A Hare, who, in a civil way,
Complied with every thing, like Gay,
Was known by all the bestial train, 10
Who haunt the wood, or graze the plain: 10
Her care was, never to offend,
And every creature was her friend.

As forth she went at early dawn
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
Behind she hears the hunter's cries, 15
And from the deep-mouthed thunder flies;
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath,
She hears the near advance of death,
She doubles, to mis-lead the hound,
And measures back her mazy round; 20
'Till, faining in the public way,
Half dead with fear she gasping lay.

What transport in her bosom grew,
When first the horse appeared in view! 25

"Let me," says she, "your back ascend, 25
And owe my safety to a friend,
You know my feet betray my flight,
To friendship every burthen's light."

The horse replied, "poor honest puss, 30
It grieves my heart to see thee thus;
Be comforted, relief is near;
For all your friends are in the rear."

She next the stately bull implored;
And thus replied the mighty lord: 35
"Since every beast alive can tell
That I sincerely wish you well,
I may, without offence, pretend
To take the freedom of a friend;
Love calls me hence; a favorite cow 40
Expects me near yon barley mow: 40
And when a lady's in the case,
You know, all other things give place.
To leave you thus might seem unkind;
But see, the goat is just behind."

The goat remarked her pulse was high, 45
Her languid head, her heavy eye;
"My back," says he, "may do you harm;
The sheep's at hand, and wool is warm."

The sheep was feeble, and complained,
His sides a load of wool sustained, 50
Said he was slow, confessed his fears;
For hounds eat sheep as well as hares.

She now the trotting calf addressed,
To save from death a friend distressed. 55
"Shall I," says he, "of tender age,
In this important care engage?
Older and abler passed you by;
How strong are those! how weak am I!
Should I presume to bear you hence,
Those friends of mine may take offence. 60
Excuse me then. You know my heart.
But dearest friends, alas, must part!
How shall we all lament! Adieu.
For see the hounds are just in view."

OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY

(From *Beggar's Opera*, Act I, Scene XII)

Macheath. Were I laid on Greenland's coast,
And in my arms embraced my
lass;

Warm amidst eternal frost,
Too soon the half year's night
would pass.

Polly. Were I sold on Indian soil, 5
Soon as the burning day was
closed,

I could mock the sultry toil,
When on my charmer's breast
reposed.

Macheath. And I would love you all the day,

Polly. Every night would kiss and play,

Macheath. If with me you'd fondly stray 11

Polly. Over the hills and far away.

1728.

YOUTH'S THE SEASON

(From *Beggar's Opera*, Act II, Scene IV)

Youth's the season made for joys,

Love is then our duty;

She alone who that employs,

Well deserves her beauty.

Let's be gay, 5

While we may,

Beauty's a flower despised in
decay.

Chorus. Youth's the season, etc.

Let us drink and sport to-day,

Ours is not to-morrow. 10

Love with youth flies swift away,

Age is nought but sorrow.

Dance and sing,

Time's on the wing,

Life never knows the return of
spring. 15

Chorus. Let us drink, etc.

1728.

COME, SWEET LASS

(From *Beggar's Opera*, Act III, Scene VIII)

Come, sweet lass,

Let's banish sorrow

'Till to-morrow;

Come, sweet lass,

Let's take a chirping 'r glass. 5

Wine can clear

The vapors of despair;

And make us light as air;

Then drink, and banish care.

1728.

LOVE'S RESORT

(From *Acis and Galatea*, Act I)

Love in her eyes sits playing,

And sheds delicious death;

Love in her lips sits straying,

And warbling in her breath.

Love on her breast sits panting, 5

And swells with soft desire,

No grace, no charm is wanting,

To set the heart on fire.

Love in, etc.

Publ. 1732.

GALATEA

(From *Acis and Galatea*, Act II)

O ruddier than the cherry,

O sweeter than the berry,

O nymph more bright

Than moonshine night,

Like kidlings blithe and merry. 5

Ripe as the melting cluster,

No lily has such lustre,

Yet hard to tame,

As raging flame,

And fierce as storms that bluster. 10

O ruddier, etc.

Publ. 1732.

WOMAN'S CHIEFEST DUTY

(From *Achilles*, Act III, Scene VIII)

Think of dress in every light;

'Tis woman's chiefest duty;

Neglecting that, our selves we slight

And undervalue beauty.

That allures the lover's eye, 5

And graces every action;

Besides, when not a creature's by,

'Tis inward satisfaction.

Publ. 1733.

r merry.

JAMES THOMSON (1700-1748)

James Thomson was a Scotchman, born in September, 1700, at Ednam in the county of Roxburgh, where his father was minister of the parish. His boyhood was spent at Southdean in the same Scottish county, whither his father moved two months after his birth. There he had about him the beautiful natural scenery of the Cheviots; and these surroundings of his early years may help to explain the fact that he became a poet of landscape. At the age of fifteen he entered the university at Edinburgh by way of preparation for the ministry of the Presbyterian Kirk. But he never entered the ministry. His university course finished, he suddenly decided to try his fortunes in London as a poet. Thither he journeyed in the early months of 1725. A year later he published *Winter*, the first installment of *The Seasons*, which was an immediate success, and established him at once as a recognized poet. By 1730 he had completed *The Seasons*. With less success, he tried his hand at tragedies and at a didactic epic poem, *Liberty*. The later years of his life, which were marked with a growing indolence of character, were spent in a pleasant suburban house in Richmond, where among other friends he entertained the poet Pope, who greatly admired *The Seasons*. Here was written *The Castle of Indolence*, a playful fantasy in the Spenserian stanza and abounding in passages of exquisite description, which was published in 1748, shortly before his death.

The Seasons, which in the final edition of 1746 extends to the very considerable length of 5541 lines, is an original and epoch-making work in that never before had any poet, ancient or modern, devoted a poem of anything like such length primarily to the description of natural scenery. Written while Pope was at the height of his power, it deals with a subject matter very different from his; it is *bucolic* rather than urban, descriptive of the rural countryside and its inhabitants as the succeeding seasons change the face of nature and the occupations of men. It is written not in the heroic couplet of Pope, but in a blank verse avowedly imitated from that of Milton, and in a poetic style which, unlike that of Pope, abounds in the Latinisms and "elevated" diction of *Paradise Lost*. But if epoch-making, it was in no sense revolutionary. It was read with eager delight by the same generation of readers who bought and admired the poems of Pope, and by Pope himself, who gave to the younger poet the most generous encouragement. Though its sweeping panorama of natural scenery includes wild romantic mountains as well as more peaceful rural scenes, and extends from the rugged regions of Lapland to the burning suns of the tropics, it is not in its temper romantic. It is in all essentials in full accord with the spirit of neo-classical poetry. With the eye of a great painter, Thomson sees the forms and glowing colors of external nature, and poetically records them with perfect fidelity to truth. He is completely objective, never interposing his own personality between the reader and the scene described, never touching that note of mystic yearning which is so characteristic of Wordsworth. Though his scenes abound in concrete detail, his description has that universal appeal on which neo-classical criticism insists; an American who has never visited Great Britain has no difficulty in realizing his landscapes. But the subject of *The Seasons* made the poem a popular one with the poets of the early nineteenth century, who found little to admire in Pope; and Thomson was accordingly hailed as a "precursor" of the Romantic Movement. If Thomson is "romantic," it is as the poet of *The Castle of Indolence* rather than of *The Seasons*.

A good life of Thomson is that of G. C. Macaulay in the English Men of Letters series, which contains also a sound and discriminating criticism of his poetry. The best edition of his poems is that of J. Logie Robertson in the Oxford Edition of Standard Authors (Oxford University Press).

THE SEASONS

WINTER (lines 1-321)

First published, 1726. The following selection is from the much expanded text of the final edition of the *Seasons*, 1746.

The subject proposed. Address to the Earl of Wilmington. First approach of Winter. According to the natural course of the season, various storms described. Rain. Wind. Snow. The driving of the snows: a man perishing among them; whence reflections on the wants and miseries of human life. The wolves descending from the Alps and Apennines. A winter evening described; as spent by philosophers; by the country people; in the city. Frost. A view of Winter within the polar circle. A thaw. The whole concluding with moral reflections on a future state.

See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train —

Vapors, and clouds, and storms. Be these
my theme,

These, that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred
glooms! ⁵

Congenial horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of
life,

When nursed by careless solitude I lived,
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,
Pleased have I wandered through your rough
domain; ¹⁰

Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent
burst;

Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brewed,

In the grim evening-sky. Thus passed the
time,
Till through the lucid chambers of the
south 15
Looked out the joyous Spring, looked out,
and smiled.

To thee, the patron of this first essay,
The Muse, O Wilmington! renews her song.
Since has she rounded the revolving year:
Skimmed the gay Spring; on eagle-pinions
borne, 20

Attempted through the Summer-blaze to
rise;

Then swept o'er Autumn with the shadowy
gale;

And now among the Wintry clouds again,
Rolled in the doubling storm, she tries to
soar;

To swell her note with all the rushing
winds; 25

To suit her sounding cadence to the floods;
As is her theme, her numbers wildly great:
Thrice happy, could she fill thy judging ear
With bold description, and with manly
thought.

Nor art thou skilled in awful schemes
alone, 30

And how to make a mighty people thrive;
But equal goodness, sound integrity,
A firm, unshaken, uncorrupted soul
Amid a sliding age, and burning strong,
Not vainly blazing, for thy country's weal, 35
A steady spirit, regularly free —
These, each exalting each, the statesman's
light

Into the patriot; these, the public hope
And eye to thee converting, bid the Muse
Record what envy dares not flattery call. 40

Now when the cheerless empire of the sky
To Capricorn the Centaur-Archer yields,
And fierce Aquarius stains the inverted
year; 45

Hung o'er the farthest verge of heaven, the
sun 44

Scarce spreads o'er ether the dejected day.
Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual shoot
His struggling rays, in horizontal lines,
Through the thick air; as clothed in cloudy
storm,

Weak, wan, and broad, he skirts the south-
ern sky;

And, soon descending, to the long dark
night, 50

Wide-shading all, the prostrate world re-
signs.

Nor is the night unwished; while vital heat,
Light, life, and joy the dubious day forsake.
Meantime, in sable cincture, shadows vast,
Deep tinged and damp, and congregated
clouds, 55

And all the vapory turbulence of heaven,
Involve the face of things. Thus Winter
falls,

A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
Through Nature shedding influence malign,
And rouses up the seeds of dark disease. 60
The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
And black with more than melancholy
views.

The cattle droop; and o'er the furrowed land,
Fresh from the plough, the dun discolored
flocks,

Untended spreading, crop the wholesome
root. 65

Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm;
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
And fractured mountains wild, the brawling
brook,

And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan, 70
Resounding long in listening fancy's ear.

Then comes the father of the tempest
forth,

Wrapt in black glooms. First, joyless rains
obscure

Drive through the mingling skies with vapor
foul,

Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the
woods, 75

That grumbling wave below. The un-
sightly plain

Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
Combine, and deepening into night, shut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of
heaven, 80

Each to his home, retire; save those that love
To take their pastime in the troubled air,
Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool.
The cattle from the untasted fields return,
And ask, with meaning low, their wonted
stalls, 85

Or ruminate in the contiguous shade.
Thither the household feathery people
crowd,

The crested cock, with all his female train,
Pensive, and dripping; while the cottage-
hind

Hangs o'er th' enlivening blaze, and taleful
there 90

Recounts his simple frolic: much he talks,
And much he laughs, nor recks the storm
that blows

1 The Sun leaves the sign of Sagittarius ("the Centaur-Archer") and enters the sign of Capricorn on December 21; a month later it enters the sign of Aquarius.

Without, and rattles on his humble roof.

Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent
swelled,

And the mixed ruin of its banks o'erspread, 95
At last the roused-up river pours along:

Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,
From the rude mountain and the mossy wild,
Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sound-
ing far; 99

Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads,
Calm, sluggish, silent; till again, constrained
Between two meeting hills, it bursts away,
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid
stream;

There gathering triple force, rapid and deep,
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders
through. 105

Nature! great parent! whose unceasing
hand

Rolls round the seasons of the changeful
year,

How mighty, how majestic, are thy works!

With what a pleasing dread they swell the
soul,

That sees astonished! and astonished sings!

Ye too, ye winds! that now begin to blow 111

With boisterous sweep, I raise my voice to
you.

Where are your stores, ye powerful beings!
say,

Where your aerial magazines reserved,
To swell the brooding terrors of the storm?

In what far-distant region of the sky, 116

Hushed in deep silence, sleep ye when 'tis
calm?

When from the pallid sky the Sun descends,
With many a spot, that o'er his glaring orb

Uncertain wanders, stained; red fiery streaks

Begin to flush around. The reeling clouds 121

Stagger with dizzy poise, as doubting yet

Which master to obey; while, rising slow,

Blank in the leaden-colored east, the moon

Wears a wan circle round her blunted
horns. 125

Seen through the turbid, fluctuating air,

The stars obtuse emit a shivering ray;

Or frequent seem to shoot athwart the gloom,

And long behind them trail the whitening
blaze.

Snatched in short eddies, plays the withered
leaf; 130

And on the flood the dancing feather floats.

With broadened nostrils to the sky up-
turned,

The conscious heifer snuffs the stormy gale.

E'en as the matron, at her nightly task,

With pensive labor draws the flaxen thread,

The wasted taper and the crackling flame 136

Foretell the blast. But chief the plummy
race,

The tenants of the sky, its changes speak.

Retiring from the downs, where all day long

They picked their scanty fare, a blackening
train 140

Of clamorous rooks thick-urge their weary
flight,

And seek the closing shelter of the grove;

Assiduous, in his bower, the wailing owl

Plies his sad song. The cormorant on high

Wheels from the deep, and screams along
the land. 145

Loud shrieks the soaring hern; and with wild
wing

The circling sea-fowl cleave the flaky clouds.

Ocean, unequal pressed, with broken tide

And blind commotion heaves; while from the
shore,

Eat into caverns by the restless wave, 150

And forest-rustling mountains, comes a
voice

That, solemn sounding, bids the world pre-
pare.

Then issues forth the storm with sudden
burst,

And hurls the whole precipitated air

Down in a torrent. On the passive main 155

Descends the ethereal force, and with strong
gust

Turns from its bottom the discolored deep.

Through the black night that sits immense
around,

Lashed into foam, the fierce conflicting brine

Seems o'er a thousand raging waves to
burn: 160

Meantime the mountain-billows, to the
clouds

In dreadful tumult swelled, surge above
surge,

Burst into chaos with tremendous roar,

And anchored navies from their stations
drive,

Wild as the winds, across the howling
waste 165

Of mighty waters: now the inflated wave

Straining they scale, and now impetuous
shoot

Into the secret chambers of the deep,

The wintry Baltic thundering o'er their
head.

Emerging thence again, before the breath 170

Of full-exerted heaven they wing their course,

And dart on distant coasts — if some sharp
rock,

Or shoal insidious, break not their career,

And in loose fragments fling them floating
round.

Nor less at hand the loosened tempest
reigns: 175

The mountain thunders; and its sturdy sons
Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they shade.
Lone on the midnight steep, and all aghast,
The dark wayfaring stranger breathless toils,
And, often falling, climbs against the blast.
Low waves the rooted forest, vexed, and
sheds 181

What of its tarnished honors yet remain —
Dashed down, and scattered by the tearing
wind's

Assiduous fury, its gigantic limbs.

Thus struggling through the dissipated
grove, 185

The whirling tempest raves along the plain;
And, on the cottage thatched, or lordly roof,
Keen-fastening, shakes them to the solid
base,

Sleep frightened flies; and round the rocking
dome,

For entrance eager, howls the savage blast. 190
Then too, they say, through all the burthened
air,

Long groans are heard, shrill sounds, and
distant sighs,

That uttered by the demon of the night,
Warned the devoted¹ wretch of woe and
death.

Huge uproar lords it wide. The clouds
commixed 195

With stars swift-gliding, sweep along the
sky.

All Nature reels: till Nature's King, who oft
Amid tempestuous darkness dwells alone,
And on the wings of the careering wind
Walks dreadfully serene, commands a
calm: 200

Then straight air, sea, and earth, are hushed
at once.

As yet 'tis midnight deep. The weary
clouds,

Slow-meeting, mingle into solid gloom.

Now, while the drowsy world lies lost in
sleep,

Let me associate with the serious Night, 205
And Contemplation, her sedate compeer;
Let me shake off the intrusive cares of day,
And lay the meddling senses all aside.

Where now, ye lying vanities of life!
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train! 210
Where are you now? and what is your
amount?

Vexation, disappointment, and remorse.

Sad, sickening thought! And yet, deluded
man,

A scene of crude disjointed visions past,

¹ doomed.

And broken slumbers, rises still resolved, 215
With new-flushed hopes, to run the giddy
round.

Father of light and life! thou Good Su-
preme!

O teach me what is good! teach me Thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit; and feed my soul 220
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue
pure —

Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!

The keener tempests come: and fuming
dun

From all the livid east, or piercing north,
Thick clouds ascend: in whose capacious
womb 225

A vapory deluge lies, to snow congealed.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along;
And the sky saddens with the gathered
storm.

Through the hushed air the whitening
shower descends,

At first thin-wavering; till at last the
flakes 230

Fall broad and wide and fast, dimming the
day,

With a continual flow. The cherished fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.

'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow
melts

Along the mazy current. Low the woods 235
Bow their hoar head; and, ere the languid
sun

Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep-hid, and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. Drooping, the laborer-

OX 240

Stands covered o'er with snow, and then
demands

The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,
Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little
boon

Which Providence assigns them. One
alone, 245

The redbreast, sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,
In joyless fields, and thorny thickets, leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first 250
Against the window beats; then brisk alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the
floor,

Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where
he is —

Till, more familiar grown, the table-crumbs

Attract his slender feet. The foodless
 wilds 256
 Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The
 hare,
 Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
 By death in various forms, dark snares, and
 dogs,
 And more un pitying men, the garden
 seeks, 260
 Urged on by fearless want. The bleating
 kind
 Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glisten-
 ing earth,
 With looks of dumb despair; then, sad dis-
 persed,
 Dig for the withered herb through heaps of
 snow.
 Now, shepherds, to your helpless charge
 be kind: 265
 Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens
 With food at will; lodge them below the
 storm,
 And watch them strict; for from the bellow-
 ing east,
 In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing
 Sweeps up the burden of whole wintry
 plains 270
 In one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,
 Hid in the hollow of two neighboring hills,
 The billowy tempest whelms; till, upward
 urged,
 The valley to a shining mountain swells,
 Tipped with a wreath high-curling in the
 sky. 275
 As thus the snows arise, and, foul and
 fierce,
 All Winter drives along the darkened air,
 In his own loose-revolving fields, the swain
 Disastered stands: sees other hills ascend,
 Of unknown joyless brow; and other scenes,
 Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless
 plain: 281
 Nor finds the river nor the forest, hid
 Beneath the formless wild: but wanders on
 From hill to dale, still more and more
 astray —
 Impatient flouncing through the drifted
 heaps, 285
 Stung with the thoughts of home; the
 thoughts of home
 Rush on his nerves, and call their vigor
 forth
 In many a vain attempt. How sinks his
 soul!
 What black despair, what horror fills his
 heart,
 When, for the dusky spot which fancy
 feigned 290

His tufted cottage rising through the snow,
 He meets the roughness of the middle waste,
 Far from the track and blest abode of man;
 While round him night resistless closes fast,
 And every tempest, howling o'er his head, 295
 Renders the savage wilderness more wild.
 Then through the busy shapes into his mind,
 Of covered pits, unfathomably deep,
 A dire descent! beyond the power of frost;
 Of faithless bogs; of precipices huge, 300
 Smoothed up with snow; and, what is land,
 unknown,
 What water, of the still unfrozen spring,
 In the loose marsh or solitary lake,
 Where the fresh fountain from the bottom
 boils.
 These check his fearful steps; and down he
 sinks 305
 Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
 Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death,
 Mixed with the tender anguish nature
 shoots
 Through the wrung bosom of the dying
 man —
 His wife, his children, and his friends un-
 seen. 310
 In vain for him the officious wife prepares
 The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment
 warm;
 In vain his little children, peeping out
 Into the mingling storm, demand their sire,
 With tears of artless innocence. Alas! 315
 Nor wife, nor children, more shall he behold;
 Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every
 nerve
 The deadly Winter seizes, shuts up sense,
 And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
 Lays him along the snows, a stiffened
 corse! 320
 Stretched out and bleaching in the northern
 blast.

RULE, BRITANNIA

From the last scene of *Alfred: a Masque*, published 1740 and written in collaboration with David Mallet.

When Britain first, at Heaven's command,
 Arose from out the azure main,
 This was the charter of the land,
 And guardian angels sang this strain:
 Rule, Britannia, Britannia rules the
 waves! 5
 Britons never will be slaves!

The nations not so blest as thee,
 Must in their turns to tyrants fall,
 Whilst thou shalt flourish great and free,

- The dread and envy of them all. 10
Rule, Britannia, etc.
- Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke;
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak. 15
Rule, Britannia, etc.
- Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame;
And their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
But work their woe and thy renown. 20
Rule, Britannia, etc.
- To thee belongs the rural reign;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine;
All thine shall be the subject main,
And every shore it circles thine. 25
Rule, Britannia, etc.
- The Muses, still with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair;
Blest isle, with matchless beauty crowned,
And manly hearts to guard the fair! 30
Rule, Britannia, Britannia rules the waves;
Britons never will be slaves.

THE CASTLE OF INDOLENCE

The Castle of Indolence, in two cantos, was published in 1748, the year of Thomson's death. Unlike most poetry of the eighteenth century, it moves not in the world of actuality, but in a region of playfully romantic fantasy. It is written in the Spenserian stanza, and in a diction which echoes that of Spenser; and is one of the finest examples of the "Spenserian revival" which marks the poetry of the mid-eighteenth century, and which culminates in Byron's *Childe Harold*. Its quality of unreality made it less popular than *The Seasons* with contemporary readers, but recommended it strongly to the romantic poets of a later generation.

CANTO I

*The Castle hight of Indolence,
And its false luxury,
Where for a little time, alas!
We lived right jollily.*

I

O mortal man! who livest here by toil,
Do not complain of this thy hard estate;
That like an emmet thou must ever moil,
Is a sad sentence of an ancient date:
And, certes, there is for it reason great; 5
For though sometimes it makes thee weep
and wail,

And curse thy stars, and early drudge, and
late,
Withouten that would come an heavier
bale,
Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.

2

In lowly dale, fast by a river's side, 10
With woody hill o'er hill encompassed round,
A most enchanting wizzard did abide,
Than whom a fiend more fell is nowhere
found.
It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground;
And there a season atween June and May, 15
Half pranked with spring, with summer half
embrowned,
A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,
No living wight could work, ne cared even
for play.

3

Was nought around but images of rest:
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns be-
tween; 20
And flowery beds that slumberous influence
kest¹
From poppies breathed; and beds of pleasant
green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime unnumbered glittering streamlets
played,
And hurled everywhere their waters sheen 25
That, as they bickered through the sunny
glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling
murmur made.

4

Joined to the prattle of the purling rills,
Were heard the lowing herds along the
vale,
And flocks loud-bleating from the distant
hills, 30
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale;
And now and then sweet Philomel² would
wail,
Or stock-doves plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;
And still a coil the grasshopper did keep; 35
Yet all these sounds yblent inclined all to
sleep.

5

Full in the passage of the vale, above,
A sable, silent, solemn, forest stood,
Where nought but shadowy forms were seen
to move,

1 cast.

2 the nightingale.

As Idless fancied in her dreaming mood; 40
 And up the hills, on either side, a wood
 Of blackening pines, ay waving to and fro,
 Sent forth a sleepy horror through the
 blood;
 And where this valley winded out, below,
 The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely
 heard to flow. 45

6

A pleasing land of drowsyhed it was,
 Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,
 And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
 For ever flushing round a summer sky;
 There eke the soft delights, that witchingly 50
 Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
 And the calm pleasures, always hovered
 nigh;
 But whate'er smacked of noyance, or unrest,
 Was far, far off expelled from this delicious
 nest. 54

7

The landskip such, inspiring perfect ease,
 Where INDOLENCE (for so the wizard hight)
 Close hid his Castle mid embowering trees,
 That half shut out the beams of Phœbus
 bright,
 And made a kind of checkered day and night;
 Meanwhile, unceasing at the massy gate, 60
 Beneath a spacious palm, the wicked wight
 Was placed, and to his lute, of cruel fate,
 And labor harsh, complained, lamenting
 man's estate.

8

Thither continual pilgrims crowded still,
 From all the roads of earth that pass there
 by; 65
 For as they chanced to breathe on neighbor-
 ing hill,
 The freshness of this valley smote their eye,
 And drew them ever and anon more nigh;
 Till clustering round the enchanter false
 they hung,
 Ymolten with his syren melody, 70
 While o'er the enfeebling lute his hand he
 flung,
 And to the trembling chords these tempting
 verses sung: —

9

"Behold! ye pilgrims of this earth, be-
 hold!
 See all but man with unearned pleasure gay;
 See her bright robes the butterfly unfold, 75
 Broke from her wintry tomb in prime of
 May.

What youthful bride can equal her array!
 Who can with her for easy pleasure vie?
 From mead to mead with gentle wing to
 stray,
 From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly, 80
 Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky.

10

"Behold the merry minstrels of the morn,
 The swarming songsters of the careless grove,
 Ten thousand throats that, from the flower-
 ing thorn,
 Hymn their good God, and carol sweet of
 love, 85
 Such grateful kindly raptures them emove:
 They neither plough nor sow; ne, fit for
 flail,
 E'er to the barn the nodding sheaves they
 drove;
 Yet theirs each harvest dancing in the gale,
 Whatever crowns the hill, or smiles along the
 vale. 90

11

"Outcast of Nature, man! the wretched
 thrall
 Of bitter-dropping sweat, of sweltry pain,
 Of cares that eat away thy heart with gall,
 And of the vices an inhuman train,
 That all proceed from savage thirst of
 gain; 95
 For when hard-hearted Interest first began
 To poison earth, Astræa left the plain;
 Guile, Violence, and Murder, seized on man,
 And for soft milky streams, with blood the
 rivers ran.

12

"Come, ye, who still the cumbrous load
 of life 100
 Push hard up hill; but as the farthest steep
 You trust to gain, and put an end to strife,
 Down thunders back the stone with mighty
 sweep,
 And hurls your labors to the valley deep,
 Forever vain; come, and withouten fee 105
 I in oblivion will your sorrows steep,
 Your cares, your toils; will steep you in a sea
 Of full delight; O come, ye weary wights, to
 me!

13

"With me you need not rise at early dawn,
 To pass the joyless day in various stounds;
 Or, louting low, on upstart fortune fawn, 111
 And sell fair honor for some paltry pounds;
 Or through the city take your dirty rounds,
 To cheat, and dun, and lie, and visit pay,

Now flattering base, now giving secret
wounds. 115

Or prowl in courts of law for human prey,
In venal senate thief, or rob on broad high-
way.

14

"No cocks, with me, to rustic labor call,
From village on to village sounding clear;
To tardy swain no shrill-voiced matrons
squall; 120

No dogs, no babes, no wives, to stun your
ear;

No hammers thump; no horrid blacksmith
sear,

Ne noisy tradesman your sweet slumbers start
With sounds that are a misery to hear;
But all is calm as would delight the heart 125
Of Sybarite of old, all nature, and all art.

15

"Here nought but candor reigns, indul-
gent ease,

Good-natured lounging, sauntering up and
down;

They who are pleased themselves must al-
ways please;

On other's ways they never squint a frown,
Nor heed what haps in hamlet or in town; 131

Thus, from the source of tender Indolence,
With milky blood the heart is overflown,
Is soothed and sweetened by the social sense;
For interest, envy, pride, and strife, are
banished hence. 135

16

"What, what is virtue but repose of mind?

A pure ethereal calm, that knows no storm,
Above the reach of wild ambition's wind,
Above those passions that this world de-
form,

And torture man, a proud malignant worm!
But here, instead, soft gales of passion
play, 141

And gently stir the heart, thereby to form
A quicker sense of joy; as breezes stray
Across th' enlivened skies, and make them
still more gay.

17

"The best of men have ever loved re-
pose; 145

They hate to mingle in the filthy fray,
Where the soul sours, and gradual rancor
grows,

Imbittered more from peevish day to day.
Even those whom Fame has lent her fairest
ray,

The most renowned of worthy wights of
yore, 150

From a base world at last have stolen away:
So Scipio, to the soft Cumæan shore,
Retiring, tasted joy he never knew before.

18

"But if a little exercise you chuse,
Some zest for ease, 'tis not forbidden here. 155
Amid the groves you may indulge the muse,¹
Or tend the blooms, and deck the vernal
year;

Or, softly stealing, with your watery gear,
Along the brooks, the crimson-spotted fry
You may delude; the whilst, amused, you
hear 160

Now the hoarse stream, and now the zephyr's
sigh,
Attuned to the birds and woodland melody.

19

"O grievous folly! to heap up estate,
Losing the days you see beneath the sun;
When, sudden, comes blind unrelenting
Fate, 165

And gives the untasted portion you have
won

With ruthless toil, and many a wretch un-
done,

To those who mock you gone to Pluto's
reign,

There with sad ghosts to pine, and shadows
dun;

But sure it is of vanities most vain, 170
To toil for what you here uncoiling may ob-
tain."

20

He ceased; but still their trembling ears
retained

The deep vibrations of his witching song,
That, by a kind of magic power, constrained
To enter in, pell-mell, the listening throng.
Heaps poured on heaps, and yet they slipt
along, 176

In silent ease: as when beneath the beam
Of summer moons, the distant woods among,
Or by some flood all silvered with the gleam,
The soft-embodied fays through airy portal
stream. 180

21

By the smooth demon so it ordered was,
And here his baneful bounty first began;
Though some there were who would not
further pass,

And his alluring baits suspected han.

¹ write poetry.

The wise distrust the too fair-spoken man. 185
 Yet through the gate they cast a wishful eye:
 Not to move on, perdie, is all they can;
 For, do their very best, they cannot fly,
 But often each way look, and often sorely
 sigh.

22

When this the watchful wicked wizard
 saw, 190
 With sudden spring he leaped upon them
 strait,

And soon as touched by his unhallowed paw,
 They found themselves within the cursèd
 gate,

Full hard to be repass'd, like that of Fate.
 Not stronger were of old the giant-crew, 195
 Who sought to pull high Jove from regal
 state;

Though feeble wretch he seemed, of sallow
 hue,

Certes, who bides his grasp, will that en-
 counter rue.

23

For whomsoe'er the villain takes in hand,
 Their joints unknit, their sinews melt
 apace; 200

As lithe they grow as any willow-wand,
 And of their vanished force remains no trace:
 So when a maiden fair, of modest grace,
 In all her buxom blooming May of charms,
 Is seizèd in some losel's hot embrace, 205
 She waxeth very weakly as she warms,
 Then, sighing, yields her up to love's de-
 licious harms.

24

Waked by the crowd, slow from his bench
 arose

A comely full-spread porter, swoln with
 sleep;

His calm, broad, thoughtless, aspect breathed
 repose, 210

And in sweet torpor he was plungèd deep,
 Ne could himself from ceaseless yawning
 keep;

While o'er his eyes the drowsy liquor ran,
 Through which his half-waked soul would
 faintly peep,

Then taking his black staff, he called his
 man, 215

And roused himself as much as rouse himself
 he can.

25

The lad leaped lightly at his master's call;
 He was, to weet, a little roguish page,

Save sleep and play who minded nought at
 all,

Like most the untaught striplings of his
 age. 220

This boy he kept each band to disengage,
 Garters and buckles, task for him unfit,
 But ill-becoming his grave personage,
 And which his portly paunch would not per-
 mit,

So this same limber page to all performèd
 it. 225

26

Mean time the master-porter wide dis-
 played

Great store of caps, of slippers, and of gowns,
 Wherewith he those who entered in arrayed,
 Loose as the breeze that plays along the
 downs,

And waves the summer woods when evening
 frowns. 230

O fair undress, best dress! it checks no vein,
 But every flowing limb in pleasure drowns,
 And heightens ease with grace. This done,
 right fain

Sir Porter sat him down, and turned to sleep
 again.

27

Thus easy robed, they to the fountain
 sped, 235

That in the middle of the court up-threw
 A stream, high-spouting from its liquid bed,
 And falling back again in drizzly dew;
 There each deep draughts, as deep he thirsted,
 drew.

It was a fountain of Nepenthe ¹ rare, 240
 Whence, as Dan Homer sings, huge pleas-
 ance grew,

And sweet oblivion of vile earthly care,
 Fair gladsome waking thoughts, and joyous
 dreams more fair.

28

This rite performed, all inly pleased and
 still,

Withouten trump, was proclamation
 made: — 245

“Ye sons of Indolence, do what you will,
 And wander where you list, through hall or
 glade:

Be no man's pleasure for another's staid!
 Let each as likes him best his hours employ,
 And curst be he who minds his neighbor's
 trade! 250

Here dwells kind Ease and unreprieving Joy:
 He little merits bliss who others can annoy.”

¹ A drug which brings oblivion to sorrow.

29

Strait of these endless numbers, swarming
round

As thick as idle motes in sunny ray,
Not one eftsoons in view was to be found, ²⁵⁵
But every man strolled off his own glad way.
Wide o'er this ample court's blank area,
With all the lodges that thereto pertained,
No living creature could be seen to stray;
While solitude and perfect silence reigned, ²⁶⁰
So that to think you dreamt you almost was
constrained.

30

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid Isles,
Placed far amid the melancholy main,
(Whether it be lone fancy him beguiles,
Or that aerial beings sometimes deign ²⁶⁵
To stand embodied to our senses plain)
Sees on the naked hill or valley low,
The whilst in ocean Phœbus dips his wain,
A vast assembly moving to and fro;
Then all at once in air dissolves the won-
drous show. ²⁷⁰

31

Ye gods of quiet, and of sleep profound,
Whose soft dominion o'er this Castle sways,
And all the widely-silent places round,
Forgive me, if my trembling pen displays
What never yet was sung in mortal lays. ²⁷⁵
But how shall I attempt such arduous string?
I who have spent my nights and nightly days
In this soul-deadening place, loose-loiter-
ing —
Ah! how shall I for this uprear my moulted
wing?

32

Come on, my muse, nor stoop to low
despair, ²⁸⁰
Thou imp^t of Jove, touched by celestial fire!
Thou yet shalt sing of war, and actions fair,
Which the bold sons of Britain will inspire;
Of ancient bards thou yet shalt sweep the
lyre;
Thou yet shalt tread in tragic pall the
stage, ²⁸⁵
Paint love's enchanting woes, the hero's ire,
The sage's calm, the patriot's noble rage,
Dashing corruption down through every
worthless age.

33

The doors, that knew no shrill alarming
bell,
Ne cursèd knocker plied by villain's hand, ²⁹⁰
1 child.

Self-opened into halls, where who can tell
What elegance and grandeur wide expand,
The pride of Turkey and of Persia land?
Soft quilts on quilts, on carpets carpets
spread,
And couches stretched around in seemly
band; ²⁹⁵
And endless pillows rise to prop the head,
So that each spacious room was one full-
swelling bed.

34

And everywhere huge covered tables
stood,
With wines high-flavored, and rich viands
crowned;
Whatever sprightly juice or tasteful food ³⁰⁰
On the green bosom of this Earth are found,
And all old Ocean genders in his round —
Some hand unseen these silently displayed,
Even undemanded by a sigh or sound;
You need but wish, and, instantly obeyed, ³⁰⁵
Fair ranged the dishes rose, and thick the
glasses played.

35

Here freedom reigned without the least
alloy;
Nor gossip's tale, nor ancient maiden's gall,
Nor saintly spleen, durst murmur at our
joy,
And with envenomed tongue our pleasures
pall. ³¹⁰
For why? there was but one great rule for
all;
To wit, that each should work his own de-
sire,
And eat, drink, study, sleep, as it may
fall,
Or melt the time in love, or wake the lyre,
And carol what, unbid, the Muses might
inspire. ³¹⁵

36

The rooms with costly tapestry were
hung,
Where was inwoven many a gentle tale,
Such as of old the rural poets¹ sung,
Or of Arcadian or Sicilian vale;
Reclining lovers, in the lonely dale, ³²⁰
Poured forth at large the sweetly-tortured
heart,
Or, looking tender passion, swelled the gale,
And taught charmed Echo to resound their
smart,
While flocks, woods, streams around, re-
pose and peace impart.

1 Virgil and Theocritus.

37

Those pleased the most, where, by a cunning hand,
 Depeinten was the patriarchal age; 325
 What time Dan Abraham left the Chaldee land,
 And pastured on from verdant stage to stage,
 Where fields and fountains fresh could best engage.
 Toil was not then. Of nothing they took heed,
 But with wild beasts the silvan war to wage, 330
 And o'er vast plains their herds and flocks to feed:
 Blest sons of nature they! true golden age indeed!

38

Sometimes the pencil, in cool airy halls,
 Bade the gay gloom of vernal landskips rise,
 Or Autumn's varied shades imbrown the walls, 335
 Now the black tempest strikes the astonished eyes;
 Now down the steep the flashing torrent flies;
 The trembling sun now plays o'er ocean blue,
 And now rude mountains frown amid the skies;
 Whate'er Lorrain light-touched with softening hue, 340
 Or savage Rosa dashed, or learned Poussin drew.¹

39

Each sound, too, here to languishment inclined,
 Lulled the weak bosom, and induced ease.
 Aerial music in the warbling wind, 345
 At distance rising oft, by small degrees,
 Nearer and nearer came, till o'er the trees
 It hung, and breathed such soul-dissolving airs
 As did, alas! with soft perdition please:
 Entangled deep in its enchanting snares, 350
 The listening heart forgot all duties and all cares.

40

A certain music, never known before,
 Here lulled the pensive melancholy mind;
 Full easily obtained. Behooves no more,
 But sidelong to the gently-waving wind, 355

¹ Claude Lorraine (1600-1682), Salvator Rosa (1615-1673), Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), famous landscape-painters.

To lay the well-tuned instrument reclined,
 From which, with airy flying fingers light,
 Beyond each mortal touch the most refined,
 The god of winds drew sounds of deep delight,
 Whence, with just cause, *The Harp of Æolus*
 it hight. 360

41

Ah me! what hand can touch the string so fine?
 Who up the lofty diapason roll
 Such sweet, such sad, such solemn airs divine,
 Then let them down again into the soul?
 Now rising love they fanned; now pleasing dole 365
 They breathed, in tender musings, through the heart;
 And now a graver sacred strain they stole,
 As when seraphic hands an hymn impart:
 Wild warbling Nature all, above the reach of Art.

42

Such the gay splendor, the luxurious state,
 Of Caliphs old, who on the Tygris' shore, 370
 In mighty Bagdat, populous and great,
 Held their bright court, where was of ladies store;
 And verse, love, music still the garland wore;
 When sleep was coy, the bard, in waiting there, 375
 Cheered the lone midnight with the muse's lore,
 Composing music bade his dreams be fair,
 And music lent new gladness to the morning air.

43

Near the pavillions where we slept, still ran
 Soft-tinkling streams, and dashing waters fell, 380
 And sobbing breezes sighed, and oft began
 (So worked the wizard) wintry storms to swell,
 As heaven and earth they would together melt:¹
 At doors and windows, threatening, seemed to call
 The demons of the tempest, growling fell; 385
 Yet* the least entrance found they none at all;
 Whence sweeter grew our sleep, secure in massy hall.

¹ mingle.

44

And hither Morpheus sent his kindest
 dreams,
 Raising a world of gayer tinct and grace;
 O'er which were shadowy cast Elysian
 gleams, 390
 That played, in waving lights, from place to
 place,
 And shed a roseate smile on nature's face.
 Not Titian's pencil e'er could so array,
 So fleece with clouds the pure ethereal
 space;
 Ne could it e'er such melting forms dis-
 play, 395
 As loose on flowery beds all languishingly
 lay.

45

No, fair illusions! artful phantoms, no!
 My muse will not attempt your fairy-land:
 She has no colors that like you can glow;
 To catch your vivid scenes too gross her
 hand. 400
 But sure it is, was ne'er a subtler band
 Than these same guileful angel-seeming
 sprights,
 Who thus in dreams voluptuous, soft, and
 bland,
 Poured all the Arabian heaven upon our
 nights,
 And blessed them oft besides with more re-
 fined delights. 405

46

They were in sooth a most enchanting
 train,
 Even feigning virtue; skilful to unite
 With evil good, and strew with pleasure
 pain.
 But, for those fiends whom blood and broils
 delight,
 Who hurl the wretch, as if to hell outright, 410
 Down, down black gulfs, where sullen
 waters sleep,
 Or hold him clambering all the fearful night
 On beetling cliffs, or pent in ruins deep —
 They, till due time should serve, were bid
 far hence to keep.

47

Ye guardian spirits, to whom man is
 dear, 415
 From these foul demons shield the midnight
 gloom!
 Angels of fancy and of love, be near,
 And o'er the wilds of sleep diffuse a bloom:
 Evoke the sacred shades of Greece and
 Rome,

And let them virtue with a look impart; 420
 But chief, a while, O! lend us from the tomb
 Those long-lost friends for whom in love we
 smart,
 And fill with pious awe and joy-mixt woe the
 heart!

48

Or are you sportive? — bid the morn of
 youth
 Rise to new light, and beam afresh the
 days 425
 Of innocence, simplicity, and truth,
 To cares estranged, and manhood's thorny
 ways.
 What transport to retrace our boyish
 plays,
 Our easy bliss, when each thing joy supplied
 The woods, the mountains, and the war-
 bling maze 430
 Of the wild brooks! — But, fondly wandering
 wide,
 My muse, resume the task that yet doth
 thee abide.

49

One great amusement of our household was,
 In a huge crystal magic globe to spy,
 Still as you turned it, all things that do
 pass, 435
 Upon this ant-hill earth; where constantly
 Of idly-busy men the restless fry
 Run bustling to and fro with foolish haste
 In search of pleasures vain, that from them
 fly,
 Or which, obtained, the caitiffs dare not
 taste: 440
 When nothing is enjoyed, can there be
 greater waste?

50

Of Vanity the mirror this was called.
 Here you a muckworm of the town might
 see
 At his dull desk, amid his ledgers stalled,
 Eat up with carking care and penurie, 445
 Most like to carcase parched on gallow-tree,
 "A penny saved is a penny got;" —
 Firm to this scoundrel maxim keepeth he,
 Ne of its rigor will he bate a jot,
 Till it has quenched his fire and banishèd
 his pot. 450

51

Strait from the filth of this low grub, be-
 hold!
 Comes fluttering forth a gaudy spendthrift
 heir,

All glossy gay, enamelled all with gold,
The silly tenant of the summer-air,
In folly lost, of nothing takes he care; 455
Pimps, lawyers, stewards, harlots, flatterers
vile,

And thieving tradesmen him among them
share;

His father's ghost from Limbo-lake, the
while,

Sees this, which more damnation doth upon
him pile.

52

This globe portrayed the race of learned
men, 460

Still at their books, and turning o'er the
page

Backwards and forwards: oft they snatch the
pen

As if inspired, and in a Thespian ¹ rage,
Then write, and blot, as would your ruth
engage.

Why, authors, all this scrawl and scribbling
sore? 465

To lose the present, gain the future age,
Praised to be when you can hear no more,
And much enriched with fame when useless
worldly store?

53

Then would a splendid city rise to view,
With carts, and cars, and coaches, roaring
all: 470

Wide-poured abroad behold the prowling
crew;

See how they dash along from wall to wall!
At every door, hark how they thundering
call!

Good Lord! what can this giddy rout excite?
Why? Each on each to prey, by guile or
gall; 475

With flattery these, with slander those to
blight,

And make new tiresome parties for the com-
ing night.

54

The puzzling sons of party next appeared,
In dark cabals and nightly juntos met,
And now they whispered close, now shrug-
ging reared 480

The important shoulder; then, as if to get
New light, their twinkling eyes were inward
set.

No sooner Lucifer ² recalls affairs,
Then forth they various rush in mighty fret;

When, lo! pushed up to power, and crowned
their cares, 485

In comes another set, and kicketh them down
stairs.

55

But what most showed the vanity of life
Was to behold the nations all on fire,
In cruel broils engaged, and deadly strife,
Most Christian kings,¹ inflamed by black
desire, 490

With honorable ruffians in their hire,
Cause war to rage, and blood around to
pour.

Of this sad work when each begins to tire,
They sit them down just where they were
before,

Till for new scenes of woe peace shall their
force restore. 495

56

To number up the thousands dwelling here,
An useless were, and eke an endless task —
From kings, and those who at the helm
appear,

To gipsies brown in summer-glades who bask.
Yea, many a man, perdie, I could unmask, 500
Whose desk and table make a solemn show,
With tape-tied trash, and suits of fools that
ask

For place or pension, laid in decent row;
But these I passen by, with nameless
numbers moe.

57

Of all the gentle tenants of the place, 505
There was a man of special grave remark;
A certain tender gloom o'erspread his face,
Pensive, not sad; in thought involved, not
dark;

As soote ² this man could sing as morning-
lark,

And teach the noblest morals of the heart; 510
But these his talents were yburied stark;
Of the fine stores he nothing would impart,
Which or boon nature gave, or nature-
painting art.

58

To noontide shades incontinent he ran,
Where purls the brook with sleep-inviting
sound; 515

Or when Dan Sol to slope his wheels began,
Amid the broom he basked him on the
ground,

¹ The kings of France had the title of "most Christian king."

² sweetly.

¹ Thespis was the father of Greek tragic poetry.

² The morning star.

Where the wild thyme and camomil are found;
 There would he linger, till the latest ray
 Of light sat quivering on the welkin's
 bound, 520
 Then homeward through the twilight shad-
 ows stray,
 Sauntering and slow. So had he passèd
 many a day.

59

Yet not in thoughtless slumber were they
 past;
 For oft the heavenly fire, that lay concealed
 Emongst the sleeping embers, mounted
 fast, 525
 And all its native light anew revealed;
 Oft as he traversed the cerulean field,
 And marked the clouds that drove before the
 wind,
 Ten thousand glorious systems would he build,
 Ten thousand great ideas filled his mind; 530
 But with the clouds they fled, and left no
 trace behind.

60

With him was sometimes joined in silent
 walk
 (Profoundly silent, for they never spoke)
 One shyer still, who quite detested talk;
 Oft, stung by spleen, at once away he
 broke, 535
 To groves of pine and broad o'ershadowing
 oak;
 There inly thrilled, he wandered all alone,
 And on himself his pensive fury wroke,
 Ne ever uttered word, save when first shone
 The glittering star of eve — "Thank heaven!
 the day is done." 540

61

Here lurked a wretch who had not crept
 abroad
 For forty years, ne face of mortal seen —
 In chamber brooding like a loathly toad;
 And sure his linen was not very clean.
 Through secret loophole, that had practised
 been 545
 Near to his bed, his dinner vile he took;
 Unkempt, and rough, of squalid face and
 mien,
 Our Castle's shame! whence from his filthy
 nook,
 We drove the villain out for fitter lair to look.

62

One day there chanced into these halls to
 rove 550
 A joyous youth, who took you at first sight;

Him the wild wave of pleasure hither drove,
 Before the sprightly tempest tossing light.
 Certes, he was a most engaging wight,
 Of social glee, and wit humane though
 keen, 555
 Turning the night to day and day to night:
 For him the merry bells had rung, I ween,
 If in this nook of quiet, bells had ever been.

63

But not even pleasure to excess is good:
 What most elates then sinks the soul as
 low: 560
 When spring-tide joy pours in with copious
 flood,
 The higher still the exulting billows flow,
 The farther back again they flagging go,
 And leave us grovelling on the dreary shore;
 Taught by this son of joy, we found it so, 565
 Who, whilst he staid, kept in a gay uproar
 Our maddened Castle all, the abode of sleep
 no more.

64

As when in prime of June a burnished fly,
 Sprung from the meads, o'er which he sweeps
 along,
 Cheered by the breathing bloom and vital
 sky, 570
 Tunes up amid these airy halls his song,
 Soothing at first the gay-reposing throng;
 And oft he sips their bowl; or nearly drowned,
 He, thence recovering, drives their beds
 among,
 And scares their tender sleep, with trump
 profound, 575
 Then out again he flies, to wing his mazy
 round.

65

Another guest there was, of sense refined,
 Who felt each worth, — for every worth he
 had;
 Serene yet warm, humane yet firm his mind,
 As little touched as any man's with bad: 580
 Him through their inmost walks the Muses
 lad,
 To him the sacred love of Nature lent;
 And sometimes would he make our valley
 glad.
 Whenas we found he would not here be pent,
 To him the better sort this friendly message
 sent: — 585

66

"Come, dwell with us, true son of virtue,
 come!
 But if, alas! we cannot thee persuade

To lie content beneath our peaceful dome,
 Ne ever more to quit our quiet glade,
 Yet, when at last thy toils, but ill apaid,
 Shall dead thy fire, and damp its heavenly
 spark, 591
 Thou wilt be glad to seek the rural shade,
 There to indulge the muse, and nature mark;
 We then a lodge for thee will rear in Hagley-
 Park." ¹

67

Here whilom ligged the Esopus of the
 age, ² 595
 But called by fame, in soul yprickèd deep,
 A noble pride restored him to the stage,
 And roused him like a giant from his sleep.
 Even from his slumbers we advantage reap:
 With double force the astonished scene he
 wakes, 600
 Yet quits not nature's bounds. He knows
 to keep
 Each due decorum: now the heart he shakes,
 And now with well-urged sense the enlight-
 ened judgment takes.

68

A bard ³ here dwelt, more fat than bard be-
 seems,
 Who, void of envy, guile, and lust of
 gain, 605
 On virtue still, and nature's pleasing themes,
 Poured forth his unpremeditated strain,
 The world forsaking with a calm disdain;
 Here laughed he careless in his easy seat:
 Here quaffed, encircled ⁴ with the joyous
 train, 610
 Oft moralizing sage; his ditty sweet
 He loathèd much to write, ne carèd to repeat.

69

Full oft by holy feet our ground was trod;
 Of clerks good plenty here you mote espay;
 A little, round, fat, oily man of God, 615
 Was one I chiefly marked among the fry:
 He had a roguish twinkle in his eye,
 And shone all glittering with ungodly dew,
 If a tight ⁴ damsel chanced to trippen by;
 Which, when observed, he shrunk into his
 mew, 620
 And straight would recollect his piety anew.

70

Nor be forgot a tribe who minded nought
 (Old inmates of the place) but state-affairs:

They looked, perdie, as if they deeply
 thought;
 And on their brow sat every nation's cares. 625
 The world by them is parcelled out in
 shares,
 When in the Hall of Smoke ¹ they congress
 hold,
 And the sage berry sun-burnt Mocha bears
 Has cleared their inward eye: then, smoke-
 enrolled,
 Their oracles break forth, mysterious as of
 old. 630

71

Here languid Beauty kept her pale-faced
 court:
 Bevies of dainty dames of high degree
 From every quarter hither made resort;
 Where, from gross mortal care and business
 free,
 They lay poured out in ease and luxury: 635
 Or, should they a vain show of work as-
 sume,
 Alas! and well-a-day! what can it be?
 To knot, to twist, to range the vernal bloom;
 But far is cast the distaff, spinning-wheel,
 and loom.

72

Their only labor was to kill the time; 640
 And labor dire it is, and weary woe.
 They sit, they loll, turn o'er some idle rhyme;
 Then, rising sudden, to the glass they go,
 Or saunter forth, with tottering step and
 slow:
 This soon too rude an exercise they find; 645
 Straight on the couch their limbs again they
 throw,
 Where, hours on hours, they sighing lie
 reclined,
 And court the vapory god soft-breathing in
 the wind.

73

Now must I mark the villainy we found,
 But, ah! too late, as shall eftsoons be
 shown. 650
 A place here was, deep, dreary, under ground,
 Where still our inmates, when unpleasing
 grown,
 Diseased, and loathsome, privily were thrown.
 Far from the light of heaven they languished
 there,
 Unpitied, uttering many a bitter groan; 655
 For of these wretches taken was no care;
 Fierce fiends and hags of hell their only
 nurses were.

¹ the smoking room.

¹ The seat of Lord Lyttelton.

² James Quin, the actor.

³ Thomson himself. "The following lines of this stanza were writ by a friend of the author." — Thomson's note.

⁴ neat and trim.

74¹

Alas the change! from scenes of joy and rest
To this dark den, where Sickness tossed
alway.

Here Lethargy, with deadly sleep oppress, 660
Stretched on his back, a mighty lubbard, lay
Heaving his sides, and snored night and day:
To stir him from his traunce, it was not eath,
And his half-opened eyne he shut straight-
way;

He led, I wot, the softest way to death, 665
And taught withouten pain and strife to yield
the breath.

75

Of limbs enormous, but withal unsound,
Soft-swoln and pale, here lay the Hydropsy:
Unwieldy man! with belly monstrous round,
For ever fed with watery supply; 670
For still he drank, and yet he still was dry.
And moping here did Hypochondria sit,
Mother of Spleen, in robes of various dye,
Who vexed was full oft with ugly fit;
And some her frantic deemed, and some her
deemed a wit. 675

76

A lady proud she was, of ancient blood,
Yet oft her fear her pride made crouchen low:

¹ The four concluding stanzas were written by Thomson's friend, John Armstrong, M.D.

She felt, or fancied, in her fluttering mood,
All the diseases which the spittles¹ know,
And sought all physic which the shops
bestow, 680

And still new leaches and new drugs would
try,

Her humor ever wavering to and fro;
For sometimes she would laugh, and some-
times cry,

Then sudden waxed wroth, and all she knew
not why.

77

Fast by her side a listless maiden pined, 685
With aching head, and squeamish heart
burnings;

Pale, bloated, cold, she seemed to hate man-
kind,

Yet loved in secret all forbidden things.

And here the Tertian shakes his chilling wings;
The sleepless Gout here counts the crowing
cocks — 690

A wolf now gnaws him, now a serpent stings:
Whilst Apoplexy crammed Intemperance
knocks

Down to the ground at once, as butcher
felleth ox.²

¹ hospitals.

² A second canto, much inferior to the first, concludes the poem.

THOMAS GRAY (1716-1771)

Gray is a poet whose importance is in striking contrast with the very slender volume of his work. He was by profession a scholar, one of the most learned men of his generation — though in the field of scholarship also he published very little. Poetry was his recreation, but a recreation to which he gave the most painstaking labor, writing and rewriting until his verse should satisfy his exacting poetic taste.

From Eton School, where he made the friendship of Horace Walpole, connoisseur and "Prince of letter-writers," and of Richard West, whose early death was the occasion of a fine sonnet, he went to Cambridge. Leaving the university, he traveled on the Continent in the company of Walpole, and then settled down with his mother for two years in the little village of Stoke Poges, the scene of his Country Churchyard. The rest of his life he spent in college rooms at Cambridge in scholarly seclusion, seeing little company, taking no part in the affairs of the university, reading and annotating the Greek classic authors, studying zoölogy and botany. He never married. His letters, written to his close friends, present a very charming personality.

His poetry exhibits within its narrow compass a striking literary development. The odes on Spring and on Eton College reflect the conventions of mid-eighteenth century verse of the school which had broken away from the wit and good sense and the heroic couplet of Pope, and had turned back for literary inspiration to Spenser and Milton. There is an excessive use of personification and of "elevated" diction. The famous *Elgy*, the most continuously popular poem in the English language, while continuing in this tradition, rises above it. It expresses in perfectly chiseled phrases, and in exquisite harmonies, a mood of tender melancholy thoroughly characteristic of its author. In the words of Dr. Johnson, it "abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo." *The Bard* is in a manner wholly different. There is but little personification and no moralizing. The scene is no longer the quiet English countryside but the wild mountains of Wales; and the time is in the Middle Ages.

The theme is as romantic as the setting. Gray's contemporaries, who had been eager to praise the *Elegy*, found the *Bard* strange and hopelessly obscure.

A convenient edition of Gray, which includes all his important poems, and a selection from his letters, is that of W. L. Phelps in the Athenæum Press Series (Ginn & Co.). For his life, see the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

ODE ON THE SPRING

Lo! where the rosy-bosomed Hours,
Fair VENUS' train appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untaught harmony of spring:
While, whispering pleasure as they fly,
Cool Zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky
Their gathered fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick-branches stretch
A broader browner shade;
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er-canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the muse shall sit, and think
(At ease reclined in rustic state)
How vain the ardor of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
How indigent the great!

Still is the toiling hand of care:
The panting herds repose:
Yet hark, how thro' the peopled air
The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some shew their gaily-gilded trim
Quick-glancing to the sun.

To contemplation's sober eye
Such is the race of man:
And they that creep, and they that fly,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the busy and the gay
But flutter thro' life's little day,
In fortune's varying colors drest:
Brushed by the hand of rough mischance,
Or chilled by age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear in accents low
The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No have hast thou of hoarded sweets,

No painted plumage to display:
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone —
We frolic, while 'tis May.

1742; published 1748.

ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT
OF ETON COLLEGE

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the wat'ry glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her HENRY'S holy Shade;
And ye, that from the stately brow
Of WINDSOR's heights th' expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way.

Ah happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!
Ah fields beloved in vain,
Where once my careless childhood strayed
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to sooth,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

Say, Father THAMES, for thou hast seen
Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margin green
The paths of pleasure trace;
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
The captive linnet which enthrall?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed,
Or urge the flying ball?

While some on earnest business bent
Their murmuring labors ply
'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint
To sweeten liberty:
Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
And unknown regions dare descry:
Still as they run they look behind,

1 King Henry the Sixth, Founder of the College. (Gray.)
2 i.e., to roll hoops. 3 i.e., break bounds.

1 The nightingale.

They hear a voice in every wind,
And snatch a fearful joy.¹

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possess'd;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast:
Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever-new
And lively cheer of vigor born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas, regardless of their doom,
The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond to-day:
Yet see how all around 'em wait
The ministers of human fate,
And black Misfortune's baleful train!
Ah, shew them where in ambush stand
To seize their prey the murderous band!
Ah, tell them they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
And Shame that skulks behind;
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
That inly gnaws the secret heart,
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-visaged comfortless Despair,
And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
Then whirl the wretch from high,
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
And grinning infamy.
The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
And hard Unkindness' altered eye,
That mocks the tear it forced to flow;
And keen Remorse with blood defiled,
And moody Madness laughing wild
Amid severest woe.

Lo, in the vale of years beneath
A grisly troop are seen,
The painful family of Death,
More hideous than their Queen:
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every laboring sinew strains,
Those in the deeper vitals rage:
Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand,
And slow-consuming Age.

¹ a joy mingled with fear.

To each his sufferings: all are men,
Condemned alike to groan;
The tender for another's pain,
Th' unfeeling for his own.
Yet, ah! why should they know their fate, 95
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies?
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise. 100

1742; published 1747.

SONNET

ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD WEST

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:
These ears, alas! for other notes repine, 5
A different object do these eyes require:
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier 10
men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear:
To warm their little loves the birds complain:
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more, because I weep in vain.
1742; published 1775.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVORITE CAT

DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD-FISHES¹

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers, that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima reclined, 5
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies, 10
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purred applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream: 15
Their scaly armor's Tyrian hue

¹ The cat belonged to Gray's friend, Horace Walpole.

Thro' richest purple to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first, and then a claw, 20
With many an ardent wish,
She stretched in vain to reach the prize:—
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent 25
Again she stretched, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled)
The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in. 30

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mewed to every watery God,
Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirred:
Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard. 35
A favorite has no friend!

From hence, ye beauties undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes 40
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize:
Nor all, that glisters, gold.

1747; published 1748.

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary
way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to
me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the
sight, 5
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning
flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon com-
plain 10
Of such, as wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's
shade,

Where heaves the turf in many a mold-
ering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid, 15
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-
built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly
bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall
burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield, 25
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has
broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy
stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure; 30
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er
gave,
Awaits¹ alike th' inevitable hour: 35
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies
raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted
vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of
praise. 40

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting
breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke² the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of
Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45
Some heart once pregnant with celestial
fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have
swayed,
Or waked to extasy the living lyre.

¹ The subject is *hour*.

² call forth.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er
unroll; 50

Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, 55
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless
breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's
blood. 60

Th' applause of listening senates to com-
mand,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscribed alone 65
Their growing virtues, but their crimes
confin'd;

Forbad to wade through slaughter to a
throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to
hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous
shame, 70

Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life 75
They kept the noiseless tenor of their
way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculp-
ture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by th' un-
lettered muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey, 85
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,

Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye re-
quires; 90
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonored
dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led, 95
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy
fate, —

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn. 100

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so
high,
His listless length at noontide would he
stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in
scorn 105
Muttering his wayward fancies he would
rove;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless
love.

"One morn I missed him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his favorite
tree; 110
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next, with dirges due in sad array
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw
him borne; —
Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the
lay, 115
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged
thorn."

THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown:
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own. 120*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompence as largely send:*

*He gave to Misery (all he had), a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he
wished) a friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose.)
The bosom of his Father and his God.*

1750; published 1751.

THE PROGRESS OF POESY

A PINDARIC ODE

I. I

Awake, Æolian lyre, awake
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:¹
The laughing flowers, that round them
blow, 5
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Thro' verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign:
Now rolling down the steep amain, 10
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the
roar.

I. 2

Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,²
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares, 15
And frantic Passions hear thy soft controul.
On Thracia's Hills the Lord of War
Has curbed the fury of his car,
And dropped his thirsty lance at thy com-
mand.
Perching on the sceptered hand 20
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king
With ruffled plumes, and flagging wing:
Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his
eye.

I. 3

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,³ 25
Tempered to thy warbled lay.
O'er Idalia's velvet-green
The rosy-crowned Loves are seen
On Cytherea's day
With antic Sports, and blue-eyed Pleasures,

¹ i.e., many streams of poetry have their rise in the fountain of the Muses on Mount Helicon.

² Power of harmony to calm the turbulent sallies of the soul. The thoughts are borrowed from the first Pythian of Pindar. (Gray.)

³ Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body. (Gray.)

Frisking light in frolic measures; 31
Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet:
To brisk notes in cadence beating
Glance their many-twinkling feet. 35
Slow melting strains their Queen's¹ approach
declare:

Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay.
With arms sublime,² that float upon the air,
In gliding state she wins her easy way:
O'er her warm cheek, and rising bosom,
move 40
The bloom of young Desire, and purple light
of Love.

II. I

Man's feeble race what ills await,
Labor, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
And Death, sad refuge from the storms of
Fate! 45
The fond complaint, my song, disprove,
And justify the laws of Jove.
Say, has he given in vain the heavenly Muse?
Night, and all her sickly dews,
Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry, 50
He gives to range the dreary sky:
Till down the eastern cliffs afar
Hyperion's march they spy, and glittering
shafts of war.

II. 2

In³ climes beyond the solar road,
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains
roam, 55
The Muse has broke the twilight-gloom
To cheer the shivering Native's dull abode.
And oft, beneath the odorous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat 60
In loose numbers wildly sweet
Their feather-cinctured chiefs, and dusky
loves.
Her track, where'er the Goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous shame,
Th' unconquerable mind, and Freedom's
holy flame. 65

II. 3

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,⁴
Isles, that crown th' Ægean deep,
Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves

¹ i.e.; Venus.

² uplifted.
³ Extensive influence of poetic genius over the remotest and most uncivilized nations: its connection with liberty, and the virtues that naturally attend it. (Gray.)

⁴ Progress of poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. (Gray.)

In lingering labyrinths creep,
 How do your tuneful echoes languish,
 Mute, but to the voice of Anguish!
 Where each old poetic mountain
 Inspiration breathed around;
 Every shade and hallowed fountain
 Murmured deep a solemn sound:
 Till the sad Nine in Greece's evil hour
 Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
 Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant-power,
 And coward Vice, that revels in her chains. 80
 When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
 They sought, oh, Albion! next thy sea-
 encircled coast.

III. 1

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
 In thy green lap was Nature's ¹ darling laid,
 What time, where lucid Avon strayed, 85
 To him the mighty mother did unveil
 Her awful face: The dauntless child
 Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.
 "This pencil take (she said) whose colors
 clear
 Richly paint the vernal year: 90
 Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
 This can unlock the gates of Joy;
 Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
 Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic
 tears."

III. 2

Nor second He,² that rode sublime 95
 Upon the seraph-wings of Extasy,
 The secrets of th' abyss to spy.
 He passed the flaming bounds of place and
 time:
 The living throne, the sapphire-blaze,
 Where Angels tremble, while they gaze, 100
 He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
 Closed his eyes in endless night.
 Behold where Dryden's less presumptuous
 car,
 Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
 Two coursers of ethereal race,³ 105
 With necks in thunder clothed, and long-
 resounding pace.

III. 3

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
 Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
 Scatters from her pictured urn
 Thoughts that breathe, and words that
 burn. 110
 But ah! 'tis heard no more —

¹ Shakespeare. (Gray.)² Milton. (Gray.)³ Meant to express the stately march and sounding energy of Dryden's rhimes. (Gray.)

70 Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
 Wakes thee now? tho' he inherit
 Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
 That the Theban Eagle ¹ bear 115
 Sailing with supreme dominion
 Thro' the azure deep of air:
 Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
 Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
 With orient hues, unborrowed of the sun: 120
 Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
 Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
 Beneath the good how far — but far above
 the great.

1754; published 1757.

THE BARD

A PINDARIC ODE ²

I. 1

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
 Confusion on thy banners wait,
 Tho' fanned by Conquest's crimson wing
 They mock the air with idle state.
 Helm, nor hauberk's³ twisted mail, 5
 Nor e'en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail
 To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
 From Cambria's⁴ curse, from Cambria's
 tears!"

Such were the sounds, that o'er the crested
 pride

Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,
 As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
 He wound with toilsome march his long array.
 Stout Glos'ter stood aghast in speechless
 trance: ⁵

To arms! cried Mortimer, and couched his
 quivering lance.⁶

I. 2

On a rock, whose haughty brow 15
 Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
 Robed in the sable garb of woe,
 With haggard eyes the Poet stood;
 (Loose his beard, and hoary hair
 Streamed, like a meteor, to the troubled
 air) 20

¹ Pindar. (Gray.)² This Ode is founded on a Tradition current in Wales, that Edward the First, when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the Bards that fell into his hands to be put to death. (Gray.)³ The Hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets, or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail, that sat close to the body, and adapted itself to every motion. (Gray.)⁴ Wales.⁵ Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, son-in-law to King Edward. (Gray.)⁶ Edmond de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore.They both were *Lords-Marchers*, whose lands lay on the borders of Wales, and probably accompanied the King in this expedition. (Gray.)

And with a master's hand, and prophet's
fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.
"Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they
wave, 25
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's
lay.

I. 3

"Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hushed the stormy main: 30
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed;
Mountains, ye mourn in vain,
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon's bow his cloud-
topped head.
On dreary Arvon's shore they lie, 35
Smeared with gore, and ghastly pale:
Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
The famished eagle screams, and passes by.
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art, 39
Dear, as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my
heart,
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries —
No more I weep. They do not sleep.
On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
I see them sit, they linger yet, 45
Avengers of their native land:
With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of
thy line.

II. I

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Edward's race. 50
Give ample room, and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year, and mark the night,
When Severn shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roof
that ring, 55
Shrieks of an agonizing King! 3
She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs, 4
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
From thee be born, who o'er thy country
hangs,
The scourge of Heaven. What terrors round
him wait! 60

Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

II. 2

"Mighty Victor, mighty Lord,
Low on his funeral couch he lies!
No pitying heart, no eye, afford 65
A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the sable Warrior fled? 1
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
The swarm, that in thy noon-tide beam were
born?
Gone to salute the rising morn. 70
Fair laughs 2 the morn, and soft the zephyr
blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's
sway, 75
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his
evening prey.

II. 3

"Fill high the sparkling bowl, 3
The rich repast prepare,
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast:
Close by the regal chair 80
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.
Heard ye the din of battle bray, 4
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
Long years of havoc urge their destined
course, 85
And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their
way.
Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed, 5
Revere his consort's 6 faith, his father's 7 fame,
And spare the meek usurper's holy head. 90
Above, below, the rose of snow, 9
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:
The bristled boar in infant gore 10

1 Edward, the Black Prince, dead some time before his Father. (Gray.)

2 Magnificence of Richard the Second's reign. (Gray.)

3 Richard the Second was starved to death. (Gray.)

4 The civil wars of York and Lancaster. (Gray.)

5 Henry the Sixth, George Duke of Clarence, Edward the Fifth, Richard Duke of York, &c. believed to be murdered secretly in the Tower of London. The oldest part of that structure is vulgarly attributed to Julius Cæsar. (Gray.)

6 Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, who struggled hard to save her Husband and her Crown. (Gray.)

7 Henry the Fifth. (Gray.)

8 Henry the Sixth, very near being canonized. The line of Lancaster had no right of inheritance to the Crown. (Gray.)

9 The white and red roses, devices of York and Lancaster. (Gray.)

10 The silver Boar was the badge of Richard the Third; whence he was usually known, in his own time, by the name of *the Boar*. (Gray.)

1 A mountain in Wales.

2 The shores of Caernarvonshire opposite to the Isle of Anglesey. (Gray.)

3 Edward the Second, cruelly butchered in Berkley-Castle. (Gray.)

4 Isabel of France, Edward the Second's adulterous Queen. (Gray.)

Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er th' accursed
loom,⁹⁵
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his
doom.

III. I

"Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)
Half of thy heart we consecrate.
(The web is wove. The work is done.)"¹⁰⁰
"Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
Leave me unblessed, unpitied, here to mourn:
In yon bright track, that fires the western
skies,
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's
height¹⁰⁵
Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!
No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.¹
All hail, ye genuine Kings, Britannia's issue,
hail."¹¹⁰

III. 2.

"Girt with many a Baron bold
Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty, appear.
In the midst a form divine!¹¹⁵
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line;
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face.
Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace."³

¹ It was the common belief of the Welsh nation, that King Arthur was still alive in Fairy-Land, and should return again to reign over Britain. (Gray.)

² Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied, that the Welsh should regain their sovereignty over this island; which seemed to be accomplished in the House of Tudor. (Gray.)

³ Speed, relating an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to Paul Dzialinski, Ambassador of Poland, says: "And thus she, lion-like rising, daunted the malapert Orator no less with her stately port and majestic deporture, than with the tartnesse of her princelie checkes." (Gray.)

What strings symphonious tremble in the
air,
What strains of vocal transport round her
play!¹²⁰
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin,¹ hear;
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she
sings,
Waves in the eye of Heaven her many-
colored wings.

III. 3

"The verse adorn again¹²⁵
Fierce War, and faithful Love,
And Truth severe, by fairy fiction drest.²
In buskined measures move³
Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing
breast.¹³⁰
A voice as of the cherub-choir,⁴
Gales from blooming Eden bear;
And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
That lost in long futurity expire.⁵
Fond impious Man, think'st thou yon san-
guine cloud,¹³⁵
Raised by thy breath, has quenched the orb
of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
Enough for me: with joy I see
The different doom our fates assign.¹⁴⁰
Be thine Despair, and scepter'd Care,
To triumph, and to die, are mine."
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's
height
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless
night.

1757.

¹ Taliessin, Chief of the Bards, flourished in the sixth Century. His works are still preserved, and his memory held in high veneration among his Countrymen. (Gray.)

² Spenser.

³ Shakespeare. (Gray.)

⁴ Milton. (Gray.)

⁵ The succession of Poets after Milton's time. (Gray.)

WILLIAM COLLINS (1721-1759)

William Collins was educated at Winchester School and at Oxford, where he took his B.A. degree in 1743. While still an undergraduate at Oxford, he published his *Persian Eclogues*, republished in 1757 as *Oriental Eclogues*. He settled down in London as a literary hack writer; but bad health and a natural indolence kept him from accomplishing the work that he undertook. For a short period he was confined in a madhouse. His odes appeared in December, 1746, with the date 1747. He died at the age of thirty-seven.

The total bulk of his poetry is very small, but the best of it is of a high order of excellence. In spite of certain mannerisms characteristic of the mid-eighteenth century, such as an excessive use of personified abstractions, his instinct for the right imaginative phrase, the delicate subtlety of his rhythms, his perfect balance of poetic sentiment and classic restraint, mark his odes as permanent masterpieces of English lyric verse.

ODE TO EVENING

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest
ear,

Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales;

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-
haired sun

Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy
skirts,

With brede ² ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed
bat,

With short shrill shriek, flits by on leathern
wing;

Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:

Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy
darkening vale,

May not unseemly with its stillness suit;
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and elves
Who slept in flowers the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows
with sedge,

And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier
still,

The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety
lake

Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hal-
lowed pile,

Or upland fallows grey,
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving
rain,

Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,

Views wilds, and swelling floods,

¹ embroidery.

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered
spires,

And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft
he wont,

And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest
Eve!

While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While fallow Autumn fills thy lap with
leaves;

Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-
lipped Health,

Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

1746.

THE PASSIONS

AN ODE FOR MUSIC

When Music, heavenly maid, was young,

While yet in early Greece she sung,

The Passions oft, to hear her shell,

Thronged around her magic cell,

Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,

Possest beyond the Muse's painting:

By turns they felt the glowing mind

Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined;

Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired,

Filled with fury, rapt, inspired,

From the supporting myrtles round

They snatched her instruments of sound;

And, as they oft had heard apart

Sweet lessons of her forceful art,

Each (for Madness ruled the hour)

Would prove his own expressive power.

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,

Amid the chords bewildered laid,

And back recoiled, he knew not why,

E'en at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rushed; his eyes, on fire,

In lightnings owned his secret stings;

In one rude clash he struck the lyre,

And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woful measures wan Despair

Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled;

A solemn, strange, and mingled air
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delighted measure? 30
Still it whispered promised pleasure.

And bade the lovely scenes at distance
hail!

Still would her touch the strain prolong;
And from the rocks, the woods, the
vale,

She called on Echo still, through all the
song; 35

And, where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every
close,

And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved
her golden hair.

And longer had she sung;— but, with a
frown,

Revenge impatient rose; 40
He threw his blood-stained sword, in thunder,
down;

And with a withering look,
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe. 45

And, ever and anon, he beat
The doubling drum, with furious heat;

And though sometimes, each dreary pause
between,

Dejected Pity, at his side,
Her soul-subduing voice applied, 50

Yet still he kept his wild unaltered mien,
While each strained ball of sight seemed
bursting from his head.

Thy numbers, Jealousy, to nought were
fixed;

Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of differing themes the veering song was
mixed; 55

And now it courted Love, now raving
called on Hate.

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,
Pale Melancholy sate retired;

And, from her wild sequestered seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet, 60

Poured through the mellow horn her pensive
soul:

And, dashing soft from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels joined the sound;

Through glades and glooms the mingled
measure stole,

Or, over some haunted stream, with fond
delay, 65

Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of Peace, and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs died away.

But O! how altered was its sprightlier
tone,

When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest
hue, 70

Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,

Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket
rung,

The hunter's call, to faun and dryad
known!

The oak-crowned sisters,¹ and their chaste-
eyed queen,² 75

Satyrs and sylvan boys, were seen,
Peeping from forth their alleys green:

Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear;
And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen
spear.

Last came Joy's ecstatic trial: 80
He, with viny crown advancing,

First to the lively pipe his hand ad-
drest;

But soon he saw the brisk awakening
viol,

Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved
the best;

They would have thought, who heard the
strain, 85

They saw, in Tempe's vale, her native
maids,

Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,

While, as his flying fingers kissed the
strings,

Love framed with Mirth a gay fantastic
round: 90

Loose were her tresses seen, her zone un-
bound;

And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,

Shook thousand odors from his dewy wings.

O Music! sphere-descended maid, 95
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid!

Why, goddess! why, to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?

As, in that loved Athenian bower,
You learned an all commanding power, 100

Thy mimic soul, O Nymph endeared,
Can well recall what then it heard;

Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to Virtue, Fancy, Art?

Arise, as in that elder time, 105

1 wood-nymphs.

2 Diana.

Warm, energetic,¹ chaste, sublime!
 Thy wonders, in that godlike age,
 Fill thy recording sister's page —
 'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
 Thy humblest reed could more prevail, 110
 Had more of strength, diviner rage,
 Than all which charms this laggard age;
 E'en all at once together found,
 Cecilia's mingled world of sound.²
 O bid our vain endeavors cease;
 115 Revive the just designs of Greece:
 Return in all thy simple state!
 Confirm the tales her sons relate!

1746

ODE

WRITTEN IN THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

1746

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
 By all their country's wishes blest!
 When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
 Returns to deck their hallowed mold,
 She there shall dress a sweeter sod
 Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
 By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
 There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
 To bless the turf that wraps their clay; 10
 And Freedom shall a while repair,
 To dwell a weeping hermit there!

¹ full of energy.² i.e. the music of the organ.

DIRGE IN CYMBELINE

SUNG BY GUIDERIUS AND ARVIRAGUS OVER
FIDELE¹ SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
 Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
 Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
 And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear 5
 To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;
 But shepherd lads assemble here,
 And melting virgins own their love.

No withered witch shall here be seen;
 No goblins lead their nightly crew: 10
 The female fays shall haunt the green,
 And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,
 Shall kindly lend his little aid,
 With hoary moss, and gathered flowers, 15
 To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds, and beating rain,
 In tempests shake the sylvan cell;
 Or midst the chase, on every plain,
 The tender thought on thee shall dwell; 20

Each lonely scene shall thee restore;
 For thee the tear be duly shed;
 Beloved till life can charm no more,
 And mourned till Pity's self be dead.

1744

¹ Characters in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*.

SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784)

Samuel Johnson was born in Lichfield, where his father was a bookseller of humble means. The story of his life, entirely devoid of any striking episodes, is the narrative of a heroic struggle against poverty and bad health, a struggle which brought him from the straitened obscurity of his young manhood to a position of supreme eminence as one of the dominating figures of his day.

He was a student at Pembroke College, Oxford, but because of poverty was compelled to leave without a degree. After an unsuccessful attempt at running a private school, he came to London as a miscellaneous hack-writer, where for many years he picked up a precarious and often insufficient livelihood. In 1762 he was, in recognition of his literary distinction, granted a pension of three hundred pounds a year, which enabled him to live in quiet comfort for the remainder of his life. His outstanding qualities of mind and character won for him also the friendship of the most distinguished men of his time — Sir Joshua Reynolds the painter, the great orator Burke, David Garrick the actor, who had been his pupil at Lichfield, Goldsmith, James Boswell greatest of biographers, Gibbon the historian. These men are among the members of The Club, a literary circle at whose meetings Johnson was the dominant personality. In 1775, he received from Oxford the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Johnson's writings give but an imperfect presentment of his greatness. His two poems, *London* (1738) and the *Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), are vigorous, but not brilliant, satires modeled on those of Juvenal. His essays in the *Rambler* (1750-52) and the *Idler* (1758-60) contain much wise observation and sound thought, but lack the variety and the sprightliness of manner which mark the essays of the *Spectator*. *Rasselas* (1759), a philosophical romance, in which a slender thread of story serves as occasion for a series of discussions on the theme of man's vain pursuit of happiness, is,

despite the fact that it was dashed off in a single week, his most perfect work of literary art. Here and in the *Lives of the English Poets* (1779-81), a series of biographical and critical prefaces written for a collected edition of the English poets, his prose style is at its best — a style which is rhetorical rather than familiar, which is sometimes heavy and pompous, but which at its finest is vigorous, spirited, eloquent. He is content only with the word and phrase which shall with exact accuracy express his thought — even though the right word may be a ponderous polysyllable.

Johnson, as "literary dictator" in the second half of the eighteenth century, was the stout defender of discipline and order. In politics a Tory, he regarded with bitter enmity the popular catchwords, "liberty" and "equality." Rousseau, with his cry of "return to nature," his disparagement of civilization, was anathema to him. And so in literature he set himself manfully against all those tendencies which we group together under the term "romanticism," tendencies which in his judgment made for shallow thinking, spurious idealism, pretentious obscurity, the anarchy of unrestrained individualism. Whether one think these opinions of his right or wrong, one cannot but feel admiration for the reasoned consistency and clear sincerity with which he held them, and the fearless vigor with which he expressed them.

Johnson's character, with all its lights and shades, lives for all time in the matchless biography of his devoted friend, Boswell. There more than in his own writings the man stands revealed. A convenient volume of selections from Johnson's works is that of C. G. Osgood (Henry Holt & Co.). G. B. Hill has edited his letters and the *Lives of the English Poets* (Oxford Press).

ESSAYS

The fashion set at the beginning of the eighteenth century by *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* was continued throughout the century by a host of similar periodicals. It was in this tradition that Johnson wrote *The Rambler* (1750-52) and *The Idler* (1758-60). These papers, which attained a distinct success, consist for the most part of rather ponderous moral preachments. The following selections are in a somewhat lighter vein.

THE MODERN NOVEL

The Rambler, No. 4. Saturday, March 31, 1750

Simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vita.

HOR. *Art of Poetry*, 334

And join both profit and delight in one.

CREECH

The works of fiction, with which the present generation seems more particularly delighted, are such as exhibit life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world, and influenced by passions and qualities which are really to be found in conversing with mankind.¹

This kind of writing may be termed, not improperly, the comedy of romance, and is to be conducted nearly by the rules of comic poetry. Its province is to bring about natural events by easy means, and to keep up curiosity without the help of wonder: it is therefore precluded from the machines and expedients of the heroic romance, and can neither employ giants to snatch away a lady from the nuptial rites, nor knights to bring her back from captivity; it can neither bewilder its personages in deserts, nor lodge them in imaginary castles.

¹ Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748) and Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) were doubtless in Johnson's mind.

I remember a remark made by Scaliger upon Pontanus, that all his writings are filled with the same images; and that if you take from him his lilies and his roses, his satyrs and his dryads, he will have nothing left that can be called poetry. In like manner almost all the fictions of the last age will vanish, if you deprive them of a hermit and a wood, a battle and a shipwreck.

Why this wild strain of imagination found reception so long in polite and learned ages, it is not easy to conceive; but we cannot wonder that while readers could be procured, the authors were willing to continue it; for when a man had by practice gained some fluency of language, he had no further care than to retire to his closet, let loose his invention, and heat his mind with incredibilities; a book was thus produced without fear of criticism, without the toil of study, without knowledge of nature, or acquaintance with life.

The task of our present writers is very different; it requires, together with that learning which is to be gained from books, that experience which can never be attained by solitary diligence, but must arise from general converse and accurate observation of the living world. Their performances have, as Horace expresses it, "plus oneris quantum veniæ minus," little indulgence, and therefore more difficulty. They are engaged in portraits of which every one knows the original, and can detect any deviation from exactness of resemblance. Other writings are safe, except from the malice of learning, but these are in danger from every common reader; as the slipper ill executed was censured by a shoemaker, who happened to stop in his way at the Venus of Apelles.

But the fear of not being approved as just

copiers of human manners, is not the most important concern that an author of this sort ought to have before him. These books are written chiefly to the young, the ignorant, and the idle, to whom they serve as lectures of conduct, and introductions into life. They are the entertainment of minds unfurnished with ideas, and therefore easily susceptible of impressions; not fixed by principles, and therefore easily following the current of fancy; not informed by experience, and consequently open to every false suggestion and partial account.

That the highest degree of reverence should be paid to youth, and that nothing indecent should be suffered to approach their eyes or ears, are precepts extorted by sense and virtue from an ancient writer, by no means eminent for chastity of thought. The same kind, though not the same degree, of caution, is required in everything which is laid before them, to secure them from unjust prejudices, perverse opinions, and incongruous combinations of images.

In the romances formerly written, every transaction and sentiment was so remote from all that passes among men, that the reader was in very little danger of making any applications to himself; the virtues and crimes were equally beyond his sphere of activity; and he amused himself with heroes and with traitors, deliverers and persecutors, as with beings of another species, whose actions were regulated upon motives of their own, and who had neither faults nor excellencies in common with himself.

But when an adventurer is levelled with the rest of the world, and acts in such scenes of the universal drama, as may be the lot of any other man, young spectators fix their eyes upon him with closer attention, and hope, by observing his behavior and success, to regulate their own practices, when they shall be engaged in the like part.

For this reason these familiar histories may perhaps be made of greater use than the solemnities of professed morality, and convey the knowledge of vice and virtue with more efficacy than axioms and definitions. But if the power of example is so great as to take possession of the memory by a kind of violence, and produce effects almost without the intervention of the will, care ought to be taken, that, when the choice is unrestrained, the best examples only should be exhibited; and that which is likely to operate so strongly, should not be mischievous or uncertain in its effects.

The chief advantage which these fictions have over real life is, that their authors are at liberty, though not to invent, yet to select objects, and to cull from the mass of mankind, those individuals upon which the attention ought most to be employed; as a diamond, though it cannot be made, may be polished by art, and placed in such situation, as to display that lustre which before was buried among common stones.

It is justly considered as the greatest excellency of art, to imitate nature; but it is necessary to distinguish those parts of nature, which are most proper for imitation; greater care is still required in representing life, which is so often discolored by passion, or deformed by wickedness. If the world be promiscuously described, I cannot see of what use it can be to read the account; or why it may not be as safe to turn the eye immediately upon mankind as upon a mirror which shows all that presents itself without discrimination.

It is therefore not a sufficient vindication of a character, that it is drawn as it appears; for many characters ought never to be drawn: nor of a narrative, that the train of events is agreeable to observation and experience; for that observation which is called knowledge of the world, will be found much more frequently to make men cunning than good. The purpose of these writings is surely not only to show mankind, but to provide that they may be seen hereafter with less hazard; to teach the means of avoiding the snares which are laid by TREACHERY for INNOCENCE; without infusing any wish for that superiority with which the betrayer flatters his vanity; to give the power of counteracting fraud, without the temptation to practise it; to initiate youth by mock encounters in the art of necessary defense, and to increase prudence without impairing virtue.

Many writers, for the sake of following nature, so mingle good and bad qualities in their principal personages, that they are both equally conspicuous; and as we accompany them through their adventures with delight, and are led by degrees to interest ourselves in their favor, we lose the abhorrence of their faults, because they do not hinder our pleasure, or perhaps, regard them with some kindness, for being united with so much merit.

There have been men indeed splendidly wicked, whose endowments threw a brightness on their crimes, and whom scarce any

villany made perfectly detestable, because they never could be wholly divested of their excellencies; but such have been in all ages the great corrupters of the world, and their resemblance ought no more to be preserved, than the art of murdering without pain.

Some have advanced, without due attention to the consequence of this notion, that certain virtues have their correspondent faults, and therefore that to exhibit either apart is to deviate from probability. Thus men are observed by Swift to be "grateful in the same degree as they are resentful." This principle, with others of the same kind, supposes man to act from a brute impulse, and pursue a certain degree of inclination, without any choice of the object; for, otherwise, though it should be allowed that gratitude and resentment arise from the same constitution of the passions, it follows not that they will be equally indulged when reason is consulted; yet, unless that consequence be admitted, this gracious maxim becomes an empty sound, without any relation to practice or to life.

Nor is it evident, that even the first motions to these effects are always in the same proportion. For pride, which produces quickness of resentment, will obstruct gratitude, by unwillingness to admit that inferiority which obligation implies; and it is very unlikely that he who cannot think he receives a favor, will acknowledge or repay it.

It is of the utmost importance to mankind, that positions of this tendency should be laid open and confuted; for while men consider good and evil as springing from the same root, they will spare the one for the sake of the other, and in judging, if not of others, at least of themselves, will be apt to estimate their virtues by their vices. To this fatal error all those will contribute, who confound the colors of right and wrong, and, instead of helping to settle their boundaries, mix them with so much art, that no common mind is able to disunite them.

In narratives where historical veracity has no place, I cannot discover why there should not be exhibited the most perfect idea of virtue; of virtue not angelical, nor above probability, for what we cannot credit, we shall never imitate, but the highest and purest that humanity can reach, which, exercised in such trials as the various revolutions of things shall bring upon it, may, by conquering some calamities, and enduring others, teach us what we may hope, and what we can perform. Vice, for vice is necessary to

be shown, should always disgust; nor should the graces of gaiety, or the dignity of courage, be so united with it, as to reconcile it to the mind. Wherever it appears, it should raise hatred by the malignity of its practices, and contempt by the meanness of its stratagems: for while it is supported by either parts or spirit, it will be seldom heartily abhorred. The Roman tyrant was content to be hated, if he was but feared; and there are thousands of the readers of romances willing to be thought wicked, if they may be allowed to be wits. It is therefore to be steadily inculcated, that virtue is the highest proof of understanding, and the only solid basis of greatness; and that vice is the natural consequence of narrow thoughts; that it begins in mistake, and ends in ignominy.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF AN AUTHOR

The Rambler, No. 14.

Saturday, May 5, 1750

— Nil fuit unquam

Sic impar sibi — HOR. SAT. I, 3, 18, 19

Sure such a various creature ne'er was known.

FRANCIS

Among the many inconsistencies which folly produces, or infirmity suffers in the human mind, there has often been observed a manifest and striking contrariety between the life of an author and his writings; and Milton, in a letter to a learned stranger, by whom he had been visited, with great reason congratulates himself upon the consciousness of being found equal to his own character, and having preserved, in a private and familiar interview, that reputation which his works had procured him.

Those whom the appearance of virtue, or the evidence of genius, have tempted to a nearer knowledge of the writer in whose performances they may be found, have indeed had frequent reason to repent their curiosity; the bubble that sparkled before them has become common water at the touch; the phantom of perfection has vanished when they wished to press it to their bosom. They have lost the pleasure of imagining how far humanity may be exalted, and, perhaps, felt themselves less inclined to toil up the steep of virtue, when they observe those who seem best able to point the way loitering below, as either afraid of the labor, or doubtful of the reward.

It has been long the custom of the Oriental monarchs to hide themselves in gardens and palaces, to avoid the conversation of mankind, and to be known to their subjects only by their edicts. The same policy is no less

necessary to him that writes, than to him that governs; for men would not more patiently submit to be taught, than commanded, by one known to have the same follies and weaknesses with themselves. A sudden intruder into the closet of an author would, perhaps, feel equal indignation with the officer who, having long solicited admission into the presence of Sardanapalus, saw him not consulting upon laws, inquiring into grievances, or modelling armies, but employed in feminine amusements, and directing the ladies in their work.

It is not difficult to conceive, however, that for many reasons a man writes much better than he lives. For without entering into refined speculations, it may be shown much easier to design than to perform. A man proposes his schemes of life in a state of abstraction and disengagement, exempt from the enticements of hope, the solicitations of affection, the importunities of appetite, or the depressions of fear, and is in the same state with him that teaches upon land the art of navigation, to whom the sea is always smooth, and the wind always prosperous.

The mathematicians are well acquainted with the difference between pure science, which has to do only with ideas, and the application of its laws to the use of life, in which they are constrained to submit to the imperfection of matter and the influence of accidents. Thus, in moral discussions, it is to be remembered that many impediments obstruct our practice, which very easily give way to theory. The speculatist is only in danger of erroneous reasoning; but the man involved in life has his own passions, and those of others, to encounter, and is embarrassed with a thousand inconveniencies, which confound him with variety of impulse, and either perplex or obstruct his way. He is forced to act without deliberation, and obliged to choose before he can examine; he is surprised by sudden alterations of the state of things, and changes his measures according to superficial appearances; he is led by others, either because he is indolent, or because he is timorous; he is sometimes afraid to know what is right, and sometimes finds friends or enemies diligent to deceive him.

We are, therefore, not to wonder that most fail, amidst tumult, and snares, and danger, in the observance of those precepts, which they lay down in solitude, safety, and tranquillity, with a mind unbiassed, and with liberty unobstructed. It is the condition

of our present state to see more than we can attain; the exactest vigilance and caution can never maintain a single day of unmingled innocence, much less can the utmost efforts of incorporated mind reach the summits of Cæsarean power.

It is, however, necessary for the idea of perfection to be proposed, that we may have some object to which our endeavors are to be directed; and he that is most deficient in the duties of life, makes some atonement for his faults, if he warns others against his own failings, and hinders, by the salubrity of his admonitions, the contagion of his example.

Nothing is more unjust, however common, than to charge with hypocrisy him that expresses zeal for those virtues which he neglects to practice; since he may be sincerely convinced of the advantages of conquering his passions, without having yet obtained the victory, as a man may be confident of the advantages of a voyage, or a journey, without having courage or industry to undertake it, and may honestly recommend to others those attempts which he neglects himself.

The interest which the corrupt part of mankind have in hardening themselves against every motive to amendment, has disposed them to give to these contradictions, when they can be produced against the cause of virtue, that weight which they will not allow them in any other case. They see men act in opposition to their interest, without supposing that they do not know it; those who give way to the sudden violence of passion, and forsake the most important pursuits for petty pleasures, are not supposed to have changed their opinions, or to approve their own conduct. In moral or religious questions alone, they determine the sentiments by the actions, and charge every man with endeavoring to impose upon the world, whose writings are not confirmed by his life. They never consider that themselves neglect or practise something every day inconsistently with their own settled judgment, nor discover that the conduct of the advocates for virtue can little increase, or lessen, the obligations of their dictates; argument is to be invalidated only by argument, and is in itself of the same force, whether or not it convinces him by whom it is proposed.

Yet since this prejudice, however unreasonable, is always likely to have some prevalence, it is the duty of every man to take care lest he should hinder the efficacy of his own instructions. When he desires to gain the

belief of others, he should show that he believes himself; and when he teaches the fitness of virtue by his reasonings, he should, by his example, prove its possibility. Thus much at least may be required of him, that he shall not act worse than others because he writes better, nor imagine that, by the merit of his genius, he may claim indulgence beyond mortals of the lower classes, and be excused for want of prudence, or neglect of virtue.

Bacon, in his *History of the Winds*, after having offered something to the imagination as desirable, often proposes lower advantages in its place to the reason as attainable. The same method may be sometimes pursued in moral endeavors which this philosopher has observed in natural inquiries; having first set positive and absolute excellence before us, we may be pardoned though we sink down to humbler virtue, trying, however, to keep our point always in view, and struggling not to lose ground, though we cannot gain it.

It is recorded of Sir Matthew Hale, that he for a long time concealed the consecration of himself to the stricter duties of religion, lest by some flagitious and shameful action he should bring piety into disgrace. For the same reason it may be prudent for a writer, who apprehends that he shall not enforce his own maxims by his domestic character to conceal his name, that he may not injure them.

There are, indeed, a great number whose curiosity to gain a more familiar knowledge of successful writers is not so much prompted by an opinion of their power to improve as to delight, and who expect from them not arguments against vice, or dissertations on temperance or justice, but flights of wit and sallies of pleasantry, or, at least, acute remarks, nice distinctions, justness of sentiment, and elegance of diction.

This expectation is, indeed, specious and probable, and yet, such is the fate of all human hopes, that it is very often frustrated, and those who raise admiration by their books, disgust by their company. A man of letters for the most part spends in the privacies of study that season of life in which the manners are to be softened into ease, and polished into elegance; and, when he has gained knowledge enough to be respected, has neglected the minuter acts by which he might have pleased. When he enters life, if his temper be soft and timorous, he is diffident and bashful, from the knowledge of his defects; or if he was born with

spirit and resolution, he is ferocious and arrogant from the consciousness of his merit: he is either dissipated by the awe of company, and unable to recollect his reading and arrange his arguments; or he is hot and dogmatical, quick in opposition and tenacious in defense, disabled by his own violence, and confused by his haste to triumph.

The graces of writing and conversation are of different kinds, and though he who excels in one might have been, with opportunities and application, equally successful in the other, yet as many please by extemporary talk, though utterly unacquainted with the more accurate method and more labored beauties which composition requires; so it is very possible that men wholly accustomed to works of study may be without that readiness of conception and affluence of language always necessary to colloquial entertainment. They may want address to watch the hints which conversation offers for the display of their particular attainments, or they may be so much unfurnished with matter on common subjects that discourse not professedly literary glides over them as heterogeneous bodies, without admitting their conceptions to mix in the circulation.

A transition from an author's book to his conversation is too often like an entrance into a large city after a distant prospect. Remotely, we see nothing but spires of temples and turrets of palaces, and imagine it the residence of splendor, grandeur, and magnificence; but, when we have passed the gates, we find it perplexed with narrow passages, disgraced with despicable cottages, embarrassed with obstructions, and clouded with smoke.

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH

The Rambler, No. 50. Saturday, September 8, 1750

*Credebant quo grande nefas, et morte pandum,
Si juvenis vetulo non assurrexerat, et si
Barbato cuicumque puer, licet ipse videret
Plura domi fraga, et majores glandis acernos.*

JUV. 13, 54-7

And had not men the hoary head revered,
And boys paid reverence when a man appeared,
Both must have died, though richer skins they wore,
And saw more heaps of acorns in their store.

CREECH

I have always thought it the business of those who turn their speculations upon the living world, to commend the virtues, as well as to expose the faults of their contemporaries and to confute a false as well as to support a just accusation; not only because it is peculiarly the business of a monitor to keep his own reputation untainted, lest those who can

once charge him with partiality, should indulge themselves afterwards in disbelieving him at pleasure; but because he may find real crimes sufficient to give full employment to caution or repentance, without distracting the mind by needless scruples and vain solicitudes.

There are certain fixed and stated reproaches that one part of mankind has in all ages thrown upon another, which are regularly transmitted through continued successions, and which he that has once suffered them is certain to use with the same undistinguishing vehemence, when he has changed his station, and gained the prescriptive right of inflicting on others what he had formerly endured himself.

To these hereditary imputations, of which no man sees the justice, till it becomes his interest to see it, very little regard is to be shown; since it does not appear that they are produced by ratiocination or inquiry, but received implicitly, or caught by a kind of instantaneous contagion, and supported rather by willingness to credit, than ability to prove them.

It has been always the practice of those who are desirous to believe themselves made venerable by length of time, to censure the new comers into life for want of respect to grey hairs and sage experience, for heady confidence in their own understandings, for hasty conclusions upon partial views, for disregard of counsels, which their fathers and grandsires are ready to afford them, and a rebellious impatience of that subordination to which youth is condemned by nature, as necessary to its security from evils into which it would be otherwise precipitated by the rashness of passion, and the blindness of ignorance.

Every old man complains of the growing depravity of the world, of the petulance and insolence of the rising generation. He recounts the decency and regularity of former times, and celebrates the discipline and sobriety of the age in which his youth was passed; a happy age, which is now no more to be expected, since confusion has broken in upon the world, and thrown down all the boundaries of civility and reverence.

It is not sufficiently considered how much he assumes who dares to claim the privilege of complaining; for as every man has, in his own opinion, a full share of the miseries of life, he is inclined to consider all clamorous uneasiness as a proof of impatience rather than of affliction, and to ask, "What merit

has this man to show, by which he has acquired a right to repine at the distributions of nature? Or, why does he imagine that exemptions should be granted him from the general condition of man?" We find ourselves excited rather to captiousness than pity, and instead of being in haste to soothe his complaints by sympathy and tenderness, we inquire whether the pain be proportionate to the lamentation; and whether, supposing the affliction real, it is not the effect of vice and folly, rather than calamity.

The querulousness and indignation which is observed so often to disfigure the last scene of life, naturally leads us to inquiries like these. For surely it will be thought at the first view of things, that if age be thus contemned and ridiculed, insulted and neglected, the crime must at least be equal on either part. They who have had opportunities of establishing their authority over minds ductile and unresisting, they who have been the protectors of helplessness, and the instructors of ignorance, and who yet retain in their own hands the power of wealth, and the dignity of command, must defeat their influence by their own misconduct, and make use of all these advantages with very little skill, if they cannot secure to themselves an appearance of respect, and ward off open mockery and declared contempt.

The general story of mankind will evince, that lawful and settled authority is very seldom resisted when it is well employed. Gross corruption, or evident imbecility, is necessary to the suppression of that reverence with which the majority of mankind look upon their governors, and on those whom they see surrounded by splendor, and fortified by power. For though men are drawn by their passions into forgetfulness of invisible rewards and punishments, yet they are easily kept obedient to those who have temporal dominion in their hands, till their veneration is dissipated by such wickedness and folly as can neither be defended nor concealed.

It may, therefore, very reasonably be suspected that the old draw upon themselves the greatest part of those insults which they so much lament, and that age is rarely despised but when it is contemptible. If men imagine that excess of debauchery can be made reverend by time, that knowledge is the consequence of long life, however idly or thoughtlessly employed, that priority of birth will supply the want of steadiness or honesty, can it raise much wonder that their

hopes are disappointed, and that they see their posterity rather willing to trust their own eyes in their progress into life, than enlist themselves under guides who have lost their way?

There are, indeed, many truths which time necessarily and certainly teaches, and which might, by those who have learned them from experience, be communicated to their successors at a cheaper rate: but dictates, though liberally enough bestowed, are generally without effect, the teacher gains few proselytes by instruction which his own behavior contradicts; and young men miss the benefit of counsel, because they are not very ready to believe that those who fall below them in practice, can much excel them in theory. Thus the progress of knowledge is retarded, the world is kept long in the same state, and every new race is to gain the prudence of their predecessors by committing and redressing the same miscarriages.

To secure to the old that influence which they are willing to claim, and which might so much contribute to the improvement of the arts of life, it is absolutely necessary that they give themselves up to the duties of declining years; and contentedly resign to youth its levity, its pleasures, its frolics, and its fopperies. It is a hopeless endeavor to unite the contrarieties of spring and winter; it is unjust to claim the privileges of age, and retain the playthings of childhood. The young always form magnificent ideas of the wisdom and gravity of men whom they consider as placed at a distance from them in the ranks of existence, and naturally look on those whom they find trifling with long beards, with contempt and indignation, like that which women feel at the effeminacy of men. If dotards will contend with boys in those performances in which boys must always excel them; if they will dress crippled limbs in embroidery, endeavor at gaiety with faltering voices, and darken assemblies of pleasure with the ghastliness of disease, they may well expect those who find their diversions obstructed will hoot them away; and that if they descend to competition with youth, they must bear the insolence of successful rivals.

*Lusisti satis, edisti satis atque bibisti:
Tempus abire tibi est.*

You've had your share of mirth, of meat and drink;
'Tis time to quit the scene — 'tis time to think.

ELPHINSTON

Another vice of age by which the rising

generation may be alienated from it is severity and censoriousness, that gives no allowance to the failings of early life, that expects artfulness from childhood and constancy from youth, that is peremptory in every command and inexorable to every failure. There are many who live merely to hinder happiness, and whose descendants can only tell of long life, that it produces suspicion, malignity, peevishness, and persecution; and yet even these tyrants can talk of the ingratitude of the age, curse their heirs for impatience, and wonder that young men cannot take pleasure in their father's company.

He that would pass the latter part of life with honor and decency, must, when he is young, consider that he shall one day be old; and remember, when he is old, that he has once been young. In youth he must lay up knowledge for his support, when his powers of acting shall forsake him; and in age forbear to animadvert with rigor on faults which experience only can correct.

THE BUSY LIFE OF A YOUNG LADY

The Rambler, No. 191.

Tuesday, January 14, 1752

Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper.

HOR. *Art of Poetry* 163

The youth —

Yielding like wax, th' impressive folly bears;
Rough to reproof, and slow to future cares.

FRANCIS

TO THE RAMBLER

DEAR MR. RAMBLER:

I have been four days confined to my chamber by a cold, which has already kept me from three plays, nine sales, five shows, and six card-tables, and put me seventeen visits behindhand; and the doctor tells my mamma, that if I fret and cry, it will settle in my head, and I shall not be fit to be seen these six weeks. But, dear Mr. Rambler, how can I help it? At this very time Melissa is dancing with the prettiest gentleman; she will breakfast with him to-morrow, and then run to two auctions, and hear compliments, and have presents; then she will be dressed, and visit, and get a ticket to the play; then go to cards and win, and come home with two flambeaux before her chair. Dear Mr. Rambler, who can bear it?

My aunt has just brought me a bundle of your papers for my amusement. She says, you are a philosopher, and will teach me to moderate my desires, and look upon the world with indifference. But, dear sir, I do not wish, nor intend, to moderate my de-

sires, nor can I think it proper to look upon the world with indifference, till the world looks with indifference on me. I have been forced, however, to sit this morning a whole quarter of an hour with your paper before my face; but just as my aunt came in, Phyllida had brought me a letter from Mr. Trip, which I put within the leaves; and read about "absence" and "inconsolableness," and "ardor," and "irresistible passion," and "eternal constancy," while my aunt imagined that I was puzzling myself with your philosophy, and often cried out, when she saw me look confused, "If there is any word that you do not understand, child, I will explain it."

Dear soul! How old people that think themselves wise may be imposed upon! But it is fit that they should take their turn, for I am sure, while they can keep poor girls close in the nursery, they tyrannize over us in a very shameful manner, and fill our imaginations with tales of terror, only to make us live in quiet subjection, and fancy that we can never be safe but by their protection.

I have a mamma and two aunts, who have all been formerly celebrated for wit and beauty, and are still generally admired by those that value themselves upon their understanding, and love to talk of vice and virtue, nature and simplicity, and beauty and propriety; but if there was not some hope of meeting me, scarcely a creature would come near them that wears a fashionable coat. These ladies, Mr. Rambler, have had me under their government fifteen years and a half, and have all that time been endeavoring to deceive me by such representations of life as I now find not to be true; but I know not whether I ought to impute them to ignorance or malice, as it is possible the world may be much changed since they mingled in general conversation.

Being desirous that I should love books, they told me that nothing but knowledge could make me an agreeable companion to men of sense, or qualify me to distinguish the superficial glitter of vanity from the solid merit of understanding; and that a habit of reading would enable me to fill up the vacancies of life without the help of silly or dangerous amusements, and preserve me from the snares of idleness and the inroads of temptation.

But their principal intention was to make me afraid of men; in which they succeeded so well for a time, that I durst not look in their faces, or be left alone with them in a

parlor; for they made me fancy that no man ever spoke but to deceive, or looked but to allure; that the girl who suffered him that had once squeezed her hand, to approach her a second time, was on the brink of ruin; and that she who answered a billet, without consulting her relations, gave love such power over her, that she would certainly become either poor or infamous.

From the time that my leading-strings were taken off, I scarce heard any mention of my beauty but from the milliner, the mantua-maker, and my own maid; for my mamma never said more, when she heard me commended, but "The girl is very well," and then endeavored to divert my attention by some inquiry after my needle, or my book.

It is now three months since I have been suffered to pay and receive visits, to dance at public assemblies, to have a place kept for me in the boxes, and to play at Lady Racket's rout; and you may easily imagine what I think of those who have so long cheated me with false expectations, disturbed me with fictitious terrors, and concealed from me all that I have found to make the happiness of woman.

I am so far from perceiving the usefulness or necessity of books, that if I had not dropped all pretensions to learning, I should have lost Mr. Trip, whom I once frightened into another box, by retailing some of Dryden's remarks upon a tragedy; for Mr. Trip declares that he hates nothing like hard words, and, I am sure, there is not a better partner to be found; his very walk is a dance. I have talked once or twice among ladies about principles and ideas, but they put their fans before their faces, and told me I was too wise for them, who for their part never pretended to read anything but the play-bill, and then asked me the price of my best head.

Those vacancies of time which are to be filled up with books I have never yet obtained; for, consider, Mr. Rambler, I go to bed late, and therefore cannot rise early; as soon as I am up, I dress for the gardens; then walk in the park; then always go to some sale or show, or entertainment at the little theatre; then must be dressed for dinner; then must pay my visits; then walk in the park; then hurry to the play; and from thence to the card-table. This is the general course of the day, when there happens nothing extraordinary; but sometimes I ramble into the country, and come back again to a ball; sometimes I am engaged for a whole day and part of the night. If, at any time, I can gain an

hour by not being at home, I have so many things to do, so many orders to give to the milliner, so many alterations to make in my clothes, so many visitants' names to read over, so many invitations to accept or refuse, so many cards to write, and so many fashions to consider, that I am lost in confusion, forced at last to let in company or step into my chair, and leave half my affairs to the direction of my maid.

This is the round of my day; and when shall I either stop my course, or so change it as to want a book? I suppose it cannot be imagined, that any of these diversions will soon be at an end. There will always be gardens, and a park, and auctions, and shows, and playhouses, and cards; visits will always be paid, and clothes always be worn; and how can I have time unemployed upon my hands?

But I am most at a loss to guess for what purpose they related such tragic stories of the cruelty, perfidy, and artifices of men, who, if they ever were so malicious and destructive, have certainly now reformed their manners. I have not, since my entrance into the world, found one who does not profess himself devoted to my service, and ready to live or die as I shall command him. They are so far from intending to hurt me, that their only contention is, who shall be allowed most closely to attend, and most frequently to treat me. When different places of entertainment or schemes of pleasure are mentioned, I can see the eye sparkle and the cheeks glow of him whose proposals obtain my approbation; he then leads me off in triumph, adores my condescension, and congratulates himself that he has lived to the hour of felicity. Are these, Mr. Rambler, creatures to be feared? Is it likely that any injury will be done me by those who can enjoy life only while I favor them with my presence?

As little reason can I yet find to suspect them of stratagems and fraud. When I play at cards, they never take advantage of my mistakes, nor exact from me a rigorous observation of the game. Even Mr. Shuffle, a grave gentleman, who has daughters older than myself, plays with me so negligently, that I am sometimes inclined to believe he loses his money by design, and yet he is so fond of play, that he says he will one day take me to his house in the country, that we may try by ourselves who can conquer. I have not yet promised him; but when the town grows a little empty, I shall think upon it,

for I want some trinkets, like Letitia's, to my watch. I do not doubt my luck, but must study some means of amusing¹ my relations.

For all these distinctions I find myself indebted to that beauty which I was never suffered to hear praised, and of which, therefore, I did not before know the full value. The concealment was certainly an intentional fraud, for my aunts have eyes like other people, and I am every day told that nothing but blindness can escape the influence of my charms. Their whole account of that world which they pretend to know so well, has been only one fiction entangled with another; and though the modes of life oblige me to continue some appearances of respect, I cannot think that they, who have been so clearly detected in ignorance or imposture, have any right to the esteem, veneration, or obedience of,

Sir, Yours,

BELLARIA

THE DECAY OF FRIENDSHIP

The Idler, No. 23.

Saturday, September 23, 1758

Life has no pleasure higher or nobler than that of friendship. It is painful to consider that this sublime enjoyment may be impaired or destroyed by innumerable causes, and that there is no human possession of which the duration is less certain.

Many have talked in very exalted language, of the perpetuity of friendship, of invincible constancy, and unalienable kindness; and some examples have been seen of men who have continued faithful to their earliest choice, and whose affection has predominated over changes of fortune, and contrariety of opinion.

But these instances are memorable, because they are rare. The friendship which is to be practised or expected by common mortals, must take its rise from mutual pleasure, and must end when the power ceases of delighting each other.

Many accidents therefore may happen by which the ardor of kindness will be abated, without criminal baseness or contemptible inconstancy on either part. To give pleasure is not always in our power; and little does he know himself who believes that he can be always able to receive it.

Those who would gladly pass their days together may be separated by the different course of their affairs; and friendship, like love, is destroyed by long absence,

¹ deceiving.

though it may be increased by short intermissions. What we have missed long enough to want it, we value more when it is regained; but that which has been lost till it is forgotten, will be found at last with little gladness, and with still less if a substitute has supplied the place. A man deprived of the companion to whom he used to open his bosom, and with whom he shared the hours of leisure and merriment, feels the day at first hanging heavy on him; his difficulties oppress, and his doubts distract him; he sees time come and go without his wonted gratification, and all is sadness within, and solitude about him. But this uneasiness never lasts long; necessity produces expedients, new amusements are discovered, and new conversation is admitted.

No expectation is more frequently disappointed, than that which naturally arises in the mind from the prospect of meeting an old friend after long separation. We expect the attraction to be revived, and the coalition to be renewed; no man considers how much alteration time has made in himself, and very few inquire what effect it has had upon others. The first hour convinces them that the pleasure which they have formerly enjoyed, is for ever at an end; different scenes have made different impressions; the opinions of both are changed; and that similitude of manners and sentiment is lost which confirmed them both in the approbation of themselves.

Friendship is often destroyed by opposition of interest, not only by the ponderous and visible interest which the desire of wealth and greatness forms and maintains, but by a thousand secret and slight competitions, scarcely known to the mind upon which they operate. There is scarcely any man without some favorite trille which he values above greater attainments, some desire of petty praise which he cannot patiently suffer to be frustrated. This minute ambition is sometimes crossed before it is known, and sometimes defeated by wanton petulance; but such attacks are seldom made without the

loss of friendship; for whoever has once found the vulnerable part will always be feared, and the resentment will burn on in secret, of which shame hinders the discovery.

This, however, is a slow malignity, which a wise man will obviate as inconsistent with quiet, and a good man will repress as contrary to virtue; but human happiness is sometimes violated by some more sudden strokes.

A dispute begun in jest upon a subject which a moment before was on both parts regarded with careless indifference, is continued by the desire of conquest, till vanity kindles into rage, and opposition rankles into enmity. Against this hasty mischief, I know not what security can be obtained; men will be sometimes surprised into quarrels; and though they might both hasten to reconciliation, as soon as their tumult had subsided, yet two minds will seldom be found together, which can at once subdue their discontent, or immediately enjoy the sweets of peace without remembering the wounds of the conflict.

Friendship has other enemies. Suspicion is always hardening the cautious, and disgust repelling the delicate. Very slender differences will sometimes part those whom long reciprocation of civility or beneficence has united. Lonelove and Ranger retired into the country to enjoy the company of each other, and returned in six weeks, cold and petulant; Ranger's pleasure was to walk in the fields, and Lonelove's to sit in a bower; each had complied with the other in his turn, and each was angry that compliance had been exacted.

The most fatal disease of friendship is gradual decay, or dislike hourly increased by causes too slender for complaint, and too numerous for removal. Those who are angry may be reconciled; those who have been injured may receive a recompense: but when the desire of pleasing and willingness to be pleased is silently diminished, the renovation of friendship is hopeless; as, when the vital powers sink into languor, there is no longer any use of the physician.

JAMES BOSWELL (1740-1795)

If one were to ask any competent literary jury to name the twelve greatest books in the English language, Boswell's *Life of Johnson* would be sure to receive a large number of votes; but if the same jury were asked instead to name the twenty greatest English authors, it is quite possible that Boswell would not appear on any of the lists. So great has been Boswell's success in portraying Johnson that the reader, absorbed by the subject of the biography, neglects the biographer whose excellent art and tireless industry have made it what it is. In more recent years Boswell has begun to receive more adequate attention. C. B. Tinker has published a scholarly edition of his letters (Ox-

ford University Press) and a delightful volume of biographical essays called *Young Boswell* (Atlantic Monthly Press). Boswell's *Account of Corsica* (1768) has recently been republished.

It was in 1763 that James Boswell, descendant of an old Scotch family with estates in Ayrshire, who had studied at Edinburgh and was then about to go to Utrecht in Holland to pursue the study of the law, first met Dr. Johnson. He was a young man of twenty-two; Johnson was thirty years his senior. Boswell had sought the meeting; for it was the passion of his life to associate with the great. His winning manners, his animation and gayety, his unflinching good nature, and his total lack of bashfulness, won him the affectionate acquaintance of the most distinguished men of his day, both in Great Britain and across the Channel. But of all his heroes, Samuel Johnson was the chief, and early in his acquaintance he determined to write Johnson's biography, a determination which received Johnson's approval and help.

In 1785, Boswell published his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Dr. Johnson*, which was in effect an advance section of the *Life* dealing with a single episode. Six years later, in 1791, appeared the *Life* itself, probably the greatest biography ever written. It is a full length portrait of Johnson — his greatness and his failings, his conversation and his mannerisms, — set against the background of the whole literary life of England in the second half of the eighteenth century.

The standard edition of the *Life* is that of G. B. Hill in six volumes (Oxford University Press); but numerous editions are available. C. G. Osgood has edited a skillful abridgment (Scribner), which reduces the book to about half its full length. By the kind permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, the passages printed below follow Professor Osgood's abridgment; but the omitted passages are indicated by points.

THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D

FROM THE YEAR 1763

This is to me a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two-and-twenty, I had for several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for their author, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London. Mr. Gentleman, a native of Ireland, who passed some years in Scotland as a player, and as an instructor in the English language, a man whose talents and worth were depressed by misfortunes, had given me a representation of the figure and manner of DICTIONARY JOHNSON! as he was then generally called; and during my first visit to London, which was for three months in 1760, Mr. Derrick the poet, who was Gentleman's friend and countryman, flattered me with hopes that he would introduce me to Johnson, an honor of which I was very ambitious. But he never found an opportunity; which made me doubt that he had promised to do what was not in his power; till Johnson some years afterwards told me, "Derrick, Sir, might very well have introduced you. I had a kindness for Derrick, and am sorry he is dead."

In the summer of 1761 Mr. Thomas Sheri-

dan was at Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon the English Language and Public Speaking to large and respectable audiences. I was often in his company, and heard him frequently expatiate upon Johnson's extraordinary knowledge, talents, and virtues, repeat his pointed sayings, describe his particularities, and boast of his being his guest sometimes till two or three in the morning. At his house I hoped to have many opportunities of seeing the sage, as Mr. Sheridan obligingly assured me I should not be disappointed.

When I returned to London in the end of 1762, to my surprise and regret I found an irreconcilable difference had taken place between Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan. Johnson, who, as has been already mentioned, thought slightly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing that he was also pensioned, exclaimed, "What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine." . . .

Johnson complained that a man who disliked him repeated his sarcasm to Mr. Sheridan, without telling him what followed, which was, that after a pause he added, "However, I am glad that Mr. Sheridan has a pension, for he is a very good man." Sheridan could never forgive this hasty contemptuous expression. It rankled in his mind; and though I informed him of all that Johnson said, and that he would be very glad to meet him amicably, he positively declined repeated offers which I made, and once went off abruptly from a house where he and I were engaged to dine, because he was told that Dr. Johnson was to be there. . . .

This rupture with Sheridan deprived Johnson of one of his most agreeable resources for amusement in his lonely evenings; for Sheridan's well-informed, animated, and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate; and Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man. She was sensible, ingenious, unassuming, yet communicative. I recollect, with satisfaction, many pleasing hours which I passed with her under the hospitable roof of her husband, who was to me a very kind friend. Her novel, entitled *Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph*, contains an excellent moral while it inculcates a future state of retribution; and what it teaches is impressed upon the mind by a series of as deep distress as can affect humanity, in the amiable and pious heroine who goes to her grave unrelieved, but resigned, and full of hope of "heaven's mercy." Johnson paid her this high compliment upon it: "I know not, Madam, that you have a right, upon moral principles, to make your readers suffer so much."

Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russel-street, Covent-garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him; but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife, (who has been celebrated for her beauty,) though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them, as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlor, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the

room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us, — he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my Lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his *Dictionary*, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation, which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from." — "From Scotland," cried Davies roguishly. "Mr. Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir, (said he, with a stern look,) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done; and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil.¹ I now felt myself much mortified,

¹ That this was a momentary sally against Garrick there can be no doubt; for at Johnson's desire he had,

and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardor been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited. . . .

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigor of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his Chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His Chambers were on the first floor of "No. 1, Inner-Temple-lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having "found the Giant in his den;" an expression, which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr. Blair had been presented to him by Dr. James Fordyce. At this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson, as translations of *Ossian*, was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The

some years before, given a benefit-night at his theatre to this very person, by which she had got two hundred pounds. Johnson, indeed, upon all other occasions, when I was in his company, praised the very liberal charity of Garrick. I once mentioned to him, "It is observed, Sir, that you attack Garrick yourself, but will suffer nobody else to do it." JOHNSON, (smiling) "Why, Sir, that is true." (Boswell.)

subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems? Johnson replied, "Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children." Johnson, at this time, did not know that Dr. Blair had just published a *Dissertation*, not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*; and when he was afterwards informed of this circumstance, he expressed some displeasure at Dr. Fordyce's having suggested the topic, and said, "I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to talk of a book when the author is concealed behind the door."

He received me very courteously; but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty; he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go." "Sir, (said I,) I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me." I have preserved the following short minute of what passed this day:

"Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart shewed the disturbance of his mind, by falling upon his knees, and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question."

Concerning this unfortunate poet, Christopher Smart, who was confined in a mad-house, he had, at another time, the following conversation with Dr. Burney: BURNAY. "How does poor Smart do, Sir; is he likely to recover?" JOHNSON. "It seems as if his

mind had ceased to struggle with the disease; for he grows fat upon it." BURNEY. "Perhaps, Sir, that may be from want of exercise." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; he has partly as much exercise as he used to have, for he digs in the garden. Indeed, before his confinement, he used for exercise to walk to the ale-house; but he was *carried* back again. I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him; and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was, that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it." — Johnson continued. "Mankind have a great aversion to intellectual labor; but even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would take even a little trouble to acquire it." . . .

Talking of Garrick, he said, "He is the first man in the world for sprightly conversation."

When I rose a second time he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me, that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favor me with his company one evening at my lodgings; and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

I did not visit him again till Monday, June 13, at which time I recollect no part of his conversation, except that when I told him I had been to see Johnson ride upon three horses, he said, "Such a man, Sir, should be encouraged; for his performances shew the extent of the human powers in one instance, and thus tend to raise our opinion of the faculties of man. He shews what may be attained by persevering application; so that every man may hope, that by giving as much application, although perhaps he may never ride three horses at a time, or dance upon a wire, yet he may be equally expert in whatever profession he has chosen to pursue,"

He again shook me by the hand at parting, and asked me why I did not come oftener to him. Trusting that I was now in his good graces, I answered, that he had not given me much encouragement, and reminded him of the check I had received from him at our first interview. "Poh, poh! (said he, with a complacent smile,) never mind these things. Come to me as often as you can. I shall be glad to see you."

I had learnt that his place of frequent resort was the Mitre tavern in Fleet-street, where he loved to sit up late, and I begged I might be allowed to pass an evening with him there soon, which he promised I should. A few days afterwards I met him near Temple-bar, about one o'clock in the morning, and asked if he would then go to the Mitre. "Sir, (said he) it is too late; they won't let us in. But I'll go with you another night with all my heart."

A revolution of some importance in my plan of life had just taken place; for instead of procuring a commission in the foot-guards, which was my own inclination, I had, in compliance with my father's wishes, agreed to study the law; and was soon to set out for Utrecht, to hear the lectures of an excellent Civilian in that University, and then to proceed on my travels. Though very desirous of obtaining Dr. Johnson's advice and instructions on the mode of pursuing my studies, I was at this time so occupied, shall I call it? or so dissipated, by the amusements of London, that our next meeting was not till Saturday, June 25, when happening to dine at Clifton's eating-house, in Butcher-row I was surprised to perceive Johnson come in and take his seat at another table. The mode of dining, or rather being fed, at such houses in London, is well known to many to be particularly unsocial, as there is no Ordinary, or united company, but each person has his own mess, and is under no obligation to hold any intercourse with any one. A liberal and full-minded man, however, who loves to talk, will break through this churlish and unsocial restraint. Johnson and an Irish gentleman got into a dispute concerning the cause of some part of mankind being black. "Why, Sir, (said Johnson,) it has been accounted for in three ways: either by supposing that they are the posterity of Ham, who was cursed; or that God at first created two kinds of men, one black and another white; or that by the heat of the sun the skin is scorched, and so acquires a sooty hue. This matter has been much canvassed

among naturalists, but has never been brought to any certain issue." What the Irishman said is totally obliterated from my mind; but I remember that he became very warm and intemperate in his expressions; upon which Johnson rose, and quietly walked away. When he had retired, his antagonist took his revenge, as he thought, by saying, "He has a most ungainly figure, and an affectation of pomposity, unworthy of a man of genius."

Johnson had not observed that I was in the room. I followed him, however, and he agreed to meet me in the evening at the Mitre. I called on him, and we went thither at nine. We had a good supper, and port wine, of which he then sometimes drank a bottle. The orthodox high-church sound of the MITRE, — the figure and manner of the celebrated SAMUEL JOHNSON, — the extraordinary power and precision of his conversation, and the pride arising from finding myself admitted as his companion, produced a variety of sensations, and a pleasing elevation of mind beyond what I had ever before experienced. I find in my journal the following minute of our conversation, which, though it will give but a very faint notion of what passed, is in some degree a valuable record; and it will be curious in this view, as shewing how habitual to his mind were some opinions which appear in his works.

"Colley Cibber, Sir, was by no means a blockhead; but by arrogating to himself too much, he was in danger of losing that degree of estimation to which he was entitled. His friends gave out that he *intended* his birthday *Odes* should be bad; but that was not the case, Sir; for he kept them many months by him, and a few years before he died he shewed me one of them, with great solicitude to render it as perfect as might be, and I made some corrections, to which he was not very willing to submit. I remember the following couplet in allusion to the King and himself:

'Perched on the eagle's soaring wing,
The lowly linnet loves to sing.'

Sir, he had heard something of the fabulous tale of the wren sitting upon the eagle's wing, and he had applied it to a linnet. Cibber's familiar style, however, was better than that which Whitehead has assumed. *Grand* nonsense is insupportable. Whitehead is but a little man to inscribe verses to players. . . .

"Sir, I do not think Gray a first-rate poet. He has not a bold imagination, nor much command of words. The obscurity in which

he has involved himself will not persuade us that he is sublime. His *Elegy in a Church-yard* has a happy selection of images, but I don't like what are called his great things. His *Ode* ¹ which begins

'Ruin seize thee, ruthless King,
Confusion on thy banners wait!'

has been celebrated for its abruptness, and plunging into the subject all at once. But such arts as these have no merit, unless when they are original. We admire them only once; and this abruptness has nothing new in it. We have had it often before. Nay, we have it in the old song of Johnny Armstrong:

'Is there ever a man in all Scotland
From the highest estate to the lowest degree,'
&c.

And then, Sir,

'Yes there is a man in Westmoreland,
And Johnny Armstrong they do him call.'

There, now, you plunge at once into the subject. You have no previous narration to lead you to it. The two next lines in that *Ode* are, I think, very good:

'Though fanned by conquest's crimson wing,
They mock the air with idle state.'

Finding him in a placid humor, and wishing to avail myself of the opportunity which I fortunately had of consulting a sage, to hear whose wisdom, I conceived in the ardor of youthful imagination, that men filled with a noble enthusiasm for intellectual improvement would gladly have resorted from distant lands; — I opened my mind to him ingenuously, and gave him a little sketch of my life, to which he was pleased to listen with great attention.

I acknowledged, that though educated very strictly in the principles of religion, I had for some time been misled into a certain degree of infidelity; but that I was come now to a better way of thinking, and was fully satisfied of the truth of the Christian revelation, though I was not clear as to every point considered to be orthodox. Being at all times a curious examiner of the human mind, and pleased with an undisguised display of what had passed in it, he called to me with warmth, "Give me your hand; I have taken a liking to you." He then began to descant upon the force of testimony, and

¹ *The Bard.*

the little we could know of final causes; so that the objections of, why was it so? or why was it not so? ought not to disturb us: adding, that he himself had at one period been guilty of a temporary neglect of religion, but that it was not the result of argument, but mere absence of thought.

After having given credit to reports of his bigotry, I was agreeably surprised when he expressed the following very liberal sentiment, which has the additional value of obviating an objection to our holy religion, founded upon the discordant tenets of Christians themselves: "For my part, Sir, I think all Christians, whether Papists or Protestants, agree in the essential articles, and that their differences are trivial, and rather political than religious."

We talked of belief in ghosts. He said, "Sir, I make a distinction between what a man may experience by the mere strength of his imagination, and what imagination cannot possibly produce. Thus, suppose I should think that I saw a form, and heard a voice cry 'Johnson, you are a very wicked fellow, and unless you repent you will certainly be punished;' my own unworthiness is so deeply impressed upon my mind, that I might *imagine* I thus saw and heard, and therefore I should not believe that an external communication had been made to me. But if a form should appear, and a voice should tell me that a particular man had died at a particular place, and a particular hour, a fact which I had no apprehension of, nor any means of knowing, and this fact, with all its circumstances, should afterwards be unquestionably proved, I should, in that case, be persuaded that I had supernatural intelligence imparted to me."

Here it is proper, once for all, to give a true and fair statement of Johnson's way of thinking upon the question, whether departed spirits are ever permitted to appear in this world, or in any way to operate upon human life. He has been ignorantly misrepresented as weakly credulous upon that subject; and, therefore, though I feel an inclination to disdain and treat with silent contempt so foolish a notion concerning my illustrious friend, yet as I find it has gained ground, it is necessary to refute it. The real fact then is, that Johnson had a very philosophical mind, and such a rational respect for testimony, as to make him submit his understanding to what was authentically proved, though he could not comprehend why it was so. Being thus disposed, he was

willing to inquire into the truth of any relation of supernatural agency, a general belief of which has prevailed in all nations and ages. But so far was he from being the dupe of implicit faith, that he examined the matter with a jealous attention, and no man was more ready to refute its falsehood when he had discovered it. Churchill, in his poem entitled *The Ghost*, availed himself of the absurd credulity imputed to Johnson, and drew a caricature of him under the name of "POMPOSO," representing him as one of the believers of the story of a Ghost in Cock-lane, which, in the year 1762, had gained very general credit in London. Many of my readers, I am convinced, are to this hour under an impression that Johnson was thus foolishly deceived. It will therefore surprise them a good deal when they are informed upon undoubted authority, that Johnson was one of those by whom the imposture was detected. The story had become so popular, that he thought it should be investigated; and in this research he was assisted by the Reverend Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, the great detector of impostures; who informs me, that after the gentlemen who went and examined into the evidence were satisfied of its falsity, Johnson wrote in their presence an account of it, which was published in the newspapers and *Gentleman's Magazine*, and undeceived the world.

Our conversation proceeded. "Sir, (said he) I am a friend to subordination, as most conducive to the happiness of society. There is a reciprocal pleasure in governing and being governed."

"Dr. Goldsmith is one of the first men we now have as an author, and he is a very worthy man too. He has been loose in his principles, but he is coming right." . . .

I complained to him that I had not yet acquired much knowledge, and asked his advice as to my studies. He said, "Don't talk of study now. I will give you a plan; but it will require some time to consider of it." "It is very good in you (I replied,) to allow me to be with you thus. Had it been foretold to me some years ago that I should pass an evening with the author of *The Rambler*, how should I have exulted!" What I then expressed, was sincerely from the heart. He was satisfied that it was, and cordially answered, "Sir, I am glad we have met. I hope we shall pass many evenings and mornings too, together." We finished a couple of bottles of port, and sat till between one and two in the morning. . . .

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavor to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then give much promise of future celebrity. He, however, observed to Mr. Malone, that "though he made no great figure in mathematics, which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an Ode of Horace into English better than any of them." He afterwards studied physic at Edinburgh, and upon the Continent; and I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot, partly by demanding at Universities to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when luckily for him his challenge was not accepted; so that, as I once observed to Dr. Johnson, he *disputed* his passage through Europe. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of an usher to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a newspaper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he studiously copied the manner of Johnson, though, indeed, upon a smaller scale.

At this time I think he had published nothing with his name, though it was pretty generally known that *one Dr. Goldsmith* was the author of *An Enquiry into the present State of polite Learning in Europe*, and of *The Citizen of the World*, a series of letters supposed to be written from London by a Chinese. No man had the art of displaying with more advantage as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he made. "*Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit.*"¹ His mind resembled a fertile, but thin soil. There was a quick, but not a strong vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation; but, in truth, this has been greatly exaggerated. He had, no doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable con-

fusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*, and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who were in any way distinguished, excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies with their mother on a tour in France, he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him; and once at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini* in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, "Pshaw! I can do it better myself."

He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by no means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his *Vicar of Wakefield*. But Johnson informed me, that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds. "And, Sir, (said he,) a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his *Traveller*; and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after *The Traveller* had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money."

Mrs. Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins have strangely misstated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration:—"I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was drest, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would

¹ "He touched nothing without adorning it."

be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

My next meeting with Johnson was on Friday the 1st of July, when he and I and Dr. Goldsmith supped together at the Mitre. I was before this time pretty well acquainted with Goldsmith, who was one of the brightest ornaments of the Johnsonian school. Goldsmith's respectful attachment to Johnson was then at its height; for his own literary reputation had not yet distinguished him so much as to excite a vain desire of competition with his great Master. He had increased my admiration of the goodness of Johnson's heart, by incidental remarks in the course of conversation, such as, when I mentioned Mr. Levet, whom he entertained under his roof, "He is poor and honest, which is recommendation enough to Johnson;" and when I wondered that he was very kind to a man of whom I had heard a very bad character, "He is now become miserable, and that insures the protection of Johnson." . . .

He talked very contemptuously of Churchill's poetry, observing, that "it had a temporary currency, only from its audacity of abuse, and being filled with living names, and that it would sink into oblivion." I ventured to hint that he was not quite a fair judge, as Churchill had attacked him violently. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, I am a very fair judge. He did not attack me violently till he found I did not like his poetry; and his attack on me shall not prevent me from continuing to say what I think of him, from an apprehension that it may be ascribed to resentment. No, Sir, I called the fellow a blockhead at first, and I will call him a blockhead still. However, I will acknowledge that I have a better opinion of him now, than I once had; for he has shewn more fertility than I expected. To be sure, he is a tree that cannot produce good fruit: he only bears crabs. But, Sir, a tree that produces a great many crabs is better than a tree which produces only a few." . . .

Let me here apologize for the imperfect manner in which I am obliged to exhibit Johnson's conversation at this period. In

the early part of my acquaintance with him, I was so wrapt in admiration of his extraordinary colloquial talents, and so little accustomed to his peculiar mode of expression, that I found it extremely difficult to recollect and record his conversation with its genuine vigor and vivacity. In progress of time, when my mind was, as it were, *strongly impregnated with the Johnsonian ather*, I could, with much more facility and exactness, carry in my memory and commit to paper the exuberant variety of his wisdom and wit.

At this time Miss Williams, as she was then called, though she did not reside with him in the Temple under his roof, but had lodgings in Bolt-court, Fleet-street, had so much of his attention, that he every night drank tea with her before he went home, however late it might be, and she always sat up for him. This, it may be fairly conjectured, was not alone a proof of his regard for her, but of his own unwillingness to go into solitude, before that unseasonable hour at which he had habituated himself to expect the oblivion of repose. Dr. Goldsmith, being a privileged man, went with him this night, strutting away, and calling to me with an air of superiority, like that of an esoteric over an exoteric disciple of a sage of antiquity, "I go to Miss Williams." I confess, I then envied him this mighty privilege, of which he seemed so proud; but it was not long before I obtained the same mark of distinction.

On Tuesday the 5th of July, I again visited Johnson. . . .

Talking of London, he observed, "Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists." . . .

On Wednesday, July 6, he was engaged to sup with me at my lodgings in Downing-street, Westminster. But on the preceding night my landlord having behaved very rudely to me and some company who were with me, I had resolved not to remain another night in his house. I was exceedingly uneasy at the awkward appearance I supposed I should make to Johnson and the other gentlemen whom I had invited, not being able to receive them at home, and being obliged to order supper at the Mitre.

I went to Johnson in the morning, and talked of it as a serious distress. He laughed, and said, "Consider, Sir, how insignificant this will appear a twelvemonth hence." — Were this consideration to be applied to most of the little vexatious incidents of life, by which our quiet is too often disturbed, it would prevent many painful sensations. I have tried it frequently, with good effect. "There is nothing (continued he) in this mighty misfortune; nay, we shall be better at the Mitre." . . .

I had as my guests this evening at the Mitre tavern, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Thomas Davies, Mr. Eccles, an Irish gentleman, for whose agreeable company I was obliged to Mr. Davies, and the Reverend Mr. John Ogilvie, who was desirous of being in company with my illustrious friend, while I, in my turn, was proud to have the honor of shewing one of my countrymen upon what easy terms Johnson permitted me to live with him.

Goldsmith, as usual, endeavored, with too much eagerness, to *shine*, and disputed very warmly with Johnson against the well-known maxim of the British constitution, "the King can do no wrong;" affirming, that "what was morally false could not be politically true; and as the King might, in the exercise of his regal power, command and cause the doing of what was wrong, it certainly might be said, in sense and in reason, that he could do wrong." JOHNSON. "Sir, you are to consider, that in our constitution, according to its true principles, the King is the head; he is supreme; he is above every thing, and there is no power by which he can be tried. Therefore, it is, Sir, that we hold the King can do no wrong; that whatever may happen to be wrong in government may not be above our reach, by being ascribed to Majesty. Redress is always to be had against oppression, by punishing the immediate agents. The King, though he should command, cannot force a Judge to condemn a man unjustly; therefore it is the Judge whom we prosecute and punish. Political institutions are formed upon the consideration of what will most frequently tend to the good of the whole, although now and then exceptions may occur. Thus it is better in general that a nation should have a supreme legislative power, although it may at times be abused. And then, Sir, there is this consideration, that if the abuse be enormous, Nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system." I

mark this animated sentence with peculiar pleasure, as a noble instance of that truly dignified spirit of freedom which ever glowed in his heart, though he was charged with slavish tenets by superficial observers; because he was at all times indignant against that false patriotism, that pretended love of freedom, that unruly restlessness, which is inconsistent with the stable authority of any good government. . . .

"Bayle's *Dictionary* is a very useful work for those to consult who love the biographical part of literature, which is what I love most."

Talking of the eminent writers in Queen Anne's reign, he observed, "I think Dr. Arbuthnot the first man among them. He was the most universal genius, being an excellent physician, a man of deep learning, and a man of much humor. Mr. Addison was, to be sure, a great man; his learning was not profound; but his morality, his humor, and his elegance of writing, set him very high."

Mr. Ogilvie was unlucky enough to choose for the topic of his conversation the praises of his native country. He began with saying, that there was very rich land round Edinburgh. Goldsmith, who had studied physic there, contradicted this, very untruly, with a sneering laugh. Disconcerted a little by this, Mr. Ogilvie then took new ground, where, I suppose, he thought himself perfectly safe; for he observed, that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects. JOHNSON. "I believe, Sir, you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, Sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England!" This unexpected and pointed sally produced a roar of applause. After all, however, those, who admire the rude grandeur of Nature, cannot deny it to Caledonia.

On Saturday, July 9, I found Johnson surrounded with a numerous levee, but have not preserved any part of his conversation. On the 14th we had another evening by ourselves at the Mitre. It happening to be a very rainy night, I made some common-place observations on the relaxation of nerves and depression of spirits which such weather occasioned; adding, however, that it was good for the vegetable creation. Johnson, who, as we have already seen, denied that the temperature of the air had any influence on the human frame, answered, with a smile of

ridicule. "Why yes, Sir, it is good for vegetables, and for the animals who eat those vegetables, and for the animals who eat those animals." This observation of his aptly enough introduced a good supper; and I soon forgot, in Johnson's company, the influence of a moist atmosphere.

Feeling myself now quite at ease as his companion, though I had all possible reverence for him, I expressed a regret that I could not be so easy with my father, though he was not much older than Johnson, and certainly however respectable had not more learning and greater abilities to depress me. I asked him the reason of this. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I am a man of the world. I live in the world, and I take, in some degree, the color of the world as it moves along. Your father is a Judge in a remote part of the island, and all his notions are taken from the old world. Besides, Sir, there must always be a struggle between a father and son, while one aims at power and the other at independence." . . .

He enlarged very convincingly upon the excellence of rhyme over blank verse in English poetry. I mentioned to him that Dr. Adam Smith, in his lectures upon composition, when I studied under him in the College of Glasgow, had maintained the same opinion strenuously, and I repeated some of his arguments. JOHNSON. "Sir, I was once in company with Smith, and we did not take to each other; but had I known that he loved rhyme as much as you tell me he does, I should have hugged him." . . .

"Idleness is a disease which must be combated; but I would not advise a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study. I myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in a day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge." . . .

To such a degree of unrestrained frankness had he now accustomed me, that in the course of this evening I talked of the numerous reflections which had been thrown out against him on account of his having accepted a pension from his present Majesty. "Why, Sir, (said he, with a hearty laugh,) it is a mighty foolish noise that they make.¹ I have accepted of a pension as a reward which has been thought due to my literary merit; and now that I have this pension, I am the

¹ When I mentioned the same idle clamor to him several years afterwards, he said, with a smile, "I wish my pension were twice as large, that they might make twice as much noise." (Boswell.)

same man in every respect that I have ever been; I retain the same principles. It is true, that I cannot now curse (smiling) the House of Hanover; nor would it be decent for me to drink King James's health in the wine that King George gives me money to pay for. But, Sir, I think that the pleasure of cursing the House of Hanover, and drinking King James's health, are amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year."

There was here, most certainly, an affectation of more Jacobitism than he really had. . . . Yet there is no doubt that at earlier periods he was wont often to exercise both his pleasantry and ingenuity in talking Jacobitism. My much respected friend, Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, has favored me with the following admirable instance from his Lordship's own recollection. One day, when dining at old Mr. Langton's where Miss Roberts, his niece, was one of the company, Johnson, with his usual complacent attention to the fair sex, took her by the hand and said, "My dear, I hope you are a Jacobite." Old Mr. Langton, who, though a high and steady Tory, was attached to the present Royal Family, seemed offended, and asked Johnson, with great warmth, what he could mean by putting such a question to his niece? "Why, Sir, (said Johnson) I meant no offence to your niece, I meant her a great compliment. A Jacobite, Sir, believes in the divine right of Kings. He that believes in the divine right of Kings believes in a Divinity. A Jacobite believes in the divine right of Bishops. He that believes in the divine right of Bishops believes in the divine authority of the Christian religion. Therefore, Sir, a Jacobite is neither an Atheist nor a Deist. That cannot be said of a Whig; for *Whiggism is a negation of all principle.*"¹

He advised me, when abroad, to be as much as I could with the Professors in the Universities, and with the Clergy; for from their conversation I might expect the best accounts of every thing in whatever country I should be, with the additional advantage of keeping my learning alive.

It will be observed, that when giving me advice as to my travels, Dr. Johnson did not dwell upon cities, and palaces, and pictures,

¹ He used to tell, with great humor, from my relation to him, the following little story of my early years, which was literally true: "Boswell, in the year 1745, was a fine boy, wore a white cockade, and prayed for King James, till one of his uncles (General Cochran) gave him a shilling on condition that he should pray for King George, which he accordingly did. So you see (says Boswell) that *Whigs of all ages are made the same way.*" (Boswell.)

and shows, and Arcadian scenes. He was of Lord Essex's opinion, who advises his kinsman Roger Earl of Rutland, "rather to go an hundred miles to speak with one wise man, than five miles to see a fair town."

I described to him an impudent fellow from Scotland, who affected to be a savage, and railed at all established systems. JOHNSON. "There is nothing surprising in this, Sir. He wants to make himself conspicuous. He would tumble in a hogstye, as long as you looked at him and called to him to come out. But let him alone, never mind him, and he'll soon give it over."

I added, that the same person maintained that there was no distinction between virtue and vice. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, if the fellow does not think as he speaks, he is lying; and I see not what honor he can propose to himself from having the character of a liar. But if he does really think that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, why, Sir, when he leaves our houses let us count our spoons." . . .

He recommended to me to keep a journal of my life, full and unreserved. He said it would be a very good exercise, and would yield me great satisfaction when the particulars were faded from my remembrance. I was uncommonly fortunate in having had a previous coincidence of opinion with him upon this subject, for I had kept such a journal for some time; and it was no small pleasure to me to have this to tell him, and to receive his approbation. He counselled me to keep it private, and said I might surely have a friend who would burn it in case of my death. From this habit I have been enabled to give the world so many anecdotes, which would otherwise have been lost to posterity. I mentioned that I was afraid I put into my journal too many little incidents. JOHNSON. "There is nothing, Sir, too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying little things that we attain the great art of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible."

Next morning Mr. Dempster happened to call on me, and was so much struck even with the imperfect account which I gave him of Dr. Johnson's conversation, that to his honor be it recorded, when I complained that drinking port and sitting up late with him affected my nerves for some time after, he said, "One had better be palsied at eighteen than not keep company with such a man."

On Tuesday, July 18, I found tall Sir

Thomas Robinson sitting with Johnson. Sir Thomas said, that the king of Prussia valued himself upon three things;—upon being a hero, a musician, and an author. JOHNSON.

"Pretty well, Sir, for one man. As to his being an author, I have not looked at his poetry; but his prose is poor stuff. He writes just as you might suppose Voltaire's footboy to do, who has been his amanuensis. He has such parts as the valet might have, and about as much of the coloring of the style as might be got by transcribing his works." When I was at Ferney, I repeated this to Voltaire, in order to reconcile him somewhat to Johnson, whom he, in affecting the English mode of expression, had previously characterized as "a superstitious dog"; but after hearing such a criticism on Frederick the Great, with whom he was then on bad terms, he exclaimed, "An honest fellow!" . . .

Mr. Levet this day shewed me Dr. Johnson's library, which was contained in two garrets over his Chambers, where Lintot, son of the celebrated bookseller of that name, had formerly his warehouse. I found a number of good books, but very dusty and in great confusion. The floor was strewn with manuscript leaves, in Johnson's own handwriting, which I beheld with a degree of veneration, supposing they perhaps might contain portions of *The Rambler* or of *Rasselas*. I observed an apparatus for chymical experiments, of which Johnson was all his life very fond. The place seemed to be very favorable for retirement and meditation. Johnson told me, that he went up thither without mentioning it to his servant, when he wanted to study, secure from interruption; for he would not allow his servant to say he was not at home when he really was. "A servant's strict regard for truth, (said he) must be weakened by such a practice. A philosopher may know that it is merely a form of denial; but few servants are such nice distinguishers. If I accustom a servant to tell a lie for me, have I not reason to apprehend that he will tell many lies for himself." . . .

Mr. Temple, now vicar of St. Gluvias, Cornwall, who had been my intimate friend for many years, had at this time chambers in Farrar's-buildings, at the bottom of Inner Temple-lane, which he kindly lent me upon my quitting my lodgings, he being to return to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. I found them particularly convenient for me, as they were so near Dr. Johnson's.

On Wednesday, July 20, Dr. Johnson, Mr.

Dempster, and my uncle Dr. Boswell, who happened to be now in London, supped with me at these Chambers. JOHNSON. "Pity is not natural to man. Children are always cruel. Savages are always cruel. Pity is acquired and improved by the cultivation of reason. We may have uneasy sensations from seeing a creature in distress, without pity; for we have not pity unless we wish to relieve them. When I am on my way to dine with a friend, and finding it late, have bid the coachman make haste, if I happen to attend when he whips his horses, I may feel unpleasantly that the animals are put to pain, but I do not wish him to desist. No, Sir, I wish him to drive on." . . .

Rousseau's treatise on the inequality of mankind was at this time a fashionable topic. It gave rise to an observation by Mr. Dempster, that the advantages of fortune and rank were nothing to a wise man, who ought to value only merit. JOHNSON. "If man were a savage, living in the woods by himself, this might be true; but in civilized society we all depend upon each other, and our happiness is very much owing to the good opinion of mankind. Now, Sir, in civilized society, external advantages make us more respected. A man with a good coat upon his back meets with a better reception than he who has a bad one. Sir, you may analyze this, and say what is there in it? But that will avail you nothing, for it is a part of a general system. Pound St. Paul's Church into atoms, and consider any single atom; it is, to be sure, good for nothing: but, put all these atoms together, and you have St. Paul's Church. So it is with human felicity, which is made up of many ingredients, each of which may be shewn to be very insignificant. In civilized society, personal merit will not serve you so much as money will. Sir, you may make the experiment. Go into the street, and give one man a lecture on morality, and another a shilling, and see which will respect you most. If you wish only to support nature, Sir William Petty fixes your allowance at three pounds a year; but as times are much altered, let us call it six pounds. This sum will fill your belly, shelter you from the weather, and even get you a strong lasting coat, supposing it to be made of good bull's hide. Now, Sir, all beyond this is artificial, and is desired in order to obtain a greater degree of respect from our fellow-creatures. And, Sir, if six hundred pounds a year procure a man more consequence, and, of course, more happiness

than six pounds a year, the same proportion will hold as to six thousand, and so on as far as opulence can be carried. Perhaps he who has a large fortune may not be so happy as he who has a small one; but that must proceed from other causes than from his having the large fortune: for, *cæteris paribus*,¹ he who is rich in a civilized society, must be happier than he who is poor; as riches, if properly used, (and it is a man's own fault if they are not,) must be productive of the highest advantages. Money, to be sure, of itself is of no use; for its only use is to part with it. Rousseau, and all those who deal in paradoxes, are led away by a childish desire of novelty. When I was a boy, I used always to choose the wrong side of a debate, because most ingenious things, that is to say, most new things, could be said upon it. Sir, there is nothing for which you may not muster up more plausible arguments, than those which are urged against wealth and other external advantages. Why, now, there is stealing; why should it be thought a crime? When we consider by what unjust methods property has been often acquired, and that what was unjustly got it must be unjust to keep, where is the harm in one man's taking the property of another from him? Besides, Sir, when we consider the bad use that many people make of their property, and how much better use the thief may make of it, it may be defended as a very allowable practice. Yet, Sir, the experience of mankind has discovered stealing to be so very bad a thing, that they make no scruple to hang a man for it. When I was running about this town a very poor fellow, I was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty; but I was, at the same time, very sorry to be poor. Sir, all the arguments which are brought to represent poverty as no evil, shew it to be evidently a great evil. You never find people laboring to convince you that you may live very happily upon a plentiful fortune. — So you hear people talking how miserable a King must be; and yet they all wish to be in his place."

It was suggested that Kings must be unhappy, because they are deprived of the greatest of all satisfactions, easy and unreserved society. JOHNSON. "That is an ill-founded notion. Being a King does not exclude a man from such society. Great Kings have always been social. The King of Prussia,² the only great King at present, is very social. Charles the Second, the last

¹ other things being equal.

² Frederick the Great.

King of England who was a man of parts, was social; and our Henrys and Edwards were all social."

Mr. Dempster having endeavored to maintain that intrinsic merit *ought* to make the only distinction amongst mankind. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, mankind have found that this cannot be. How shall we determine the proportion of intrinsic merit? Were that to be the only distinction amongst mankind, we should soon quarrel about the degrees of it. Were all distinctions abolished, the strongest would not long acquiesce, but would endeavor to obtain a superiority by their bodily strength. But, Sir, as subordination is very necessary for society, and contentions for superiority very dangerous, mankind, that is to say, all civilized nations, have settled it upon a plain invariable principle. A man is born to hereditary rank; or his being appointed to certain offices, gives him a certain rank. Subordination tends greatly to human happiness. Were we all upon an equality, we should have no other enjoyment than mere animal pleasure." . . .

He took care to guard himself against any possible suspicion that his settled principles of reverence for rank and respect for wealth were at all owing to mean or interested motives; for he asserted his own independence as a literary man. "No man (said he) who ever lived by literature, has lived more independently than I have done." He said he had taken longer time than he needed to have done in composing his *Dictionary*. He received our compliments upon that great work with complacency, and told us that the *Accademia della Crusca*¹ could scarcely believe that it was done by one man. . . .

At night Mr. Johnson and I supped in a private room at the Turk's Head coffee-house, in the Strand. "I encourage this house (said he;) for the mistress of it is a good civil woman, and has not much business."

"Sir, I love the acquaintance of young people; because, in the first place, I don't like to think myself growing old. In the next place, young acquaintances must last longest, if they do last; and then, Sir, young men have more virtue than old men: they have more generous sentiments in every respect. I love the young dogs of this age: they have more wit and humor and knowledge of life than we had; but then the dogs are not so good scholars. Sir, in my early

years I read very hard. It is a sad reflection, but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now. My judgement, to be sure, was not so good; but I had all the facts. I remember very well, when I was at Oxford, an old gentleman said to me, 'Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task.' . . .

He again insisted on the duty of maintaining subordination of rank. "Sir, I would no more deprive a nobleman of his respect, than of his money. I consider myself as acting a part in the great system of society, and I do to others as I would have them to do to me. I would behave to a nobleman as I should expect he would behave to me, were I a nobleman and he Sam. Johnson. Sir, there is one Mrs. Macaulay² in this town, a great republican. One day when I was at her house, I put on a very grave countenance, and said to her, 'Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, Madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen, your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us.' I thus, Sir, shewed her the absurdity of the levelling doctrine. She has never liked me since. Sir, your levellers wish to level *down* as far as themselves; but they cannot bear levelling *up* to themselves. They would all have some people under them; why not then have some people above them?" I mentioned a certain author who disgusted me by his forwardness, and by shewing no deference to noblemen into whose company he was admitted. JOHNSON. "Suppose a shoemaker should claim an equality with him, as he does with a Lord; how he would stare. 'Why, Sir, do you stare? (says the shoemaker,) I do great service to society. 'Tis true I am paid for doing it; but so are you, Sir: and I am sorry to say it, paid better than I am, for doing something not so necessary. For mankind could do better without your books, than without my shoes.' Thus, Sir, there would be a perpetual struggle for precedence, were there no fixed invariable rules for the distinction of rank, which creates no jealousy, as it is allowed to be accidental." . . .

He said he would go to the Hebrides with

¹ This Academy had compiled a dictionary of the Italian language.

² This one Mrs. Macaulay was the same personage who afterwards made herself so much known as "the celebrated female historian." (Boswell.)

me, when I returned from my travels, unless some very good companion should offer when I was absent, which he did not think probable; adding, "There are few people to whom I take so much to as you." And when I talked of my leaving England, he said with a very affectionate air, "My dear Boswell, I should be very unhappy at parting, did I think we were not to meet again." I cannot too often remind my readers, that although such instances of his kindness are doubtless very flattering to me, yet I hope my recording them will be ascribed to a better motive than to vanity; for they afford unquestionable evidence of his tenderness and complacency, which some, while they were forced to acknowledge his great powers, have been so strenuous to deny.

He maintained that a boy at school was the happiest of human beings. I supported a different opinion, from which I have never yet varied, that a man is happier; and I enlarged upon the anxiety and sufferings which are endured at school. JOHNSON. "Ah! Sir, a boy's being flogged is not so severe as a man's having the hiss of the world against him." . . .

On Tuesday, July 26, I found Mr. Johnson alone. It was a very wet day, and I again complained of the disagreeable effects of such weather. JOHNSON. "Sir, this is all imagination, which physicians encourage; for man lives in air, as a fish lives in water; so that if the atmosphere press heavy from above, there is an equal resistance from below. To be sure, bad weather is hard upon people who are obliged to be abroad; and men cannot labor so well in the open air in bad weather, as in good: but, Sir, a smith or a tailor, whose work is within doors, will surely do as much in rainy weather, as in fair. Some very delicate frames, indeed, may be affected by wet weather; but not common constitutions."

We talked of the education of children; and I asked him what he thought was best to teach them first. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is no matter what you teach them first, any more than what leg you shall put into your breeches first. Sir, you may stand disputing which is best to put in first, but in the mean time your breech is bare. Sir, while you are considering which of two things you should teach your child first, another boy has learnt them both."

On Thursday, July 28, we again supped in private at the Turk's Head coffee-house. JOHNSON. "Swift has a higher reputation

than he deserves. His excellence is strong sense; for his humor, though very well, is not remarkably good. I doubt whether *The Tale of a Tub* be his; for he never owned it, and it is much above his usual manner."

"Thomson, I think, had as much of the poet about him as most writers. Every thing appeared to him through the medium of his favorite pursuit. He could not have viewed those two candles burning but with a poetical eye." . . .

"As to the Christian religion, Sir, besides the strong evidence which we have for it, there is a balance in its favor from the number of great men who have been convinced of its truth, after a serious consideration of the question. Grotius was an acute man, a lawyer, a man accustomed to examine evidence, and he was convinced. Grotius was not a recluse, but a man of the world, who certainly had no bias to the side of religion. Sir Isaac Newton set out an infidel, and came to be a very firm believer."

He this evening recommended to me to perambulate Spain. I said it would amuse him to get a letter from me dated at Salamanca. JOHNSON. "I love the University of Salamanca; for when the Spaniards were in doubt as to the lawfulness of their conquering America, the University of Salamanca gave it as their opinion that it was not lawful." He spoke thus with great emotion, and with that generous warmth which dictated the lines in his *London*, against Spanish encroachment.

I expressed my opinion of my friend Derrick as but a poor writer. JOHNSON. "To be sure, Sir, he is; but you are to consider that his being a literary man has got for him all that he has. It has made him King of Bath. Sir, he has nothing to say for himself but that he is a writer. Had he not been a writer, he must have been sweeping the crossings in the streets, and asking halfpence from every body that past."

In justice, however, to the memory of Mr. Derrick, who was my first tutor in the ways of London, and shewed me the town in all its variety of departments, both literary and sportive, the particulars of which Dr. Johnson advised me to put in writing, it is proper to mention what Johnson, at a subsequent period, said of him both as a writer and an editor: "Sir, I have often said, that if Derrick's letters had been written by one of a more established name, they would have been thought very pretty letters." And, "I sent Derrick to Dryden's relations to gather

materials for his life; and I believe he got all that I myself should have got." . . .

Johnson said once to me, "Sir, I honor Derrick for his presence of mind. One night, when Floyd, another poor author, was wandering about the streets in the night, he found Derrick fast asleep upon a bulk; upon being suddenly waked, Derrick started up, 'My dear Floyd, I am sorry to see you in this destitute state; will you go home with me to my lodgings?'"

I again begged his advice as to my method of study at Utrecht. "Come, (said he) let us make a day of it. Let us go down to Greenwich and dine, and talk of it there." The following Saturday was fixed for this excursion.

As we walked along the Strand to-night, arm in arm, a woman of the town accosted us, in the usual enticing manner. "No, no, my girl, (said Johnson) it won't do." He, however, did not treat her with harshness, and we talked of the wretched life of such women; and agreed, that much more misery than happiness, upon the whole, is produced by illicit commerce between the sexes.

On Saturday, July 30, Dr. Johnson and I took a sculler at the Temple-stairs, and set out for Greenwich. I asked him if he really thought a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages an essential requisite to a good education. JOHNSON. "Most certainly, Sir; for those who know them have a very great advantage over those who do not. Nay, Sir, it is wonderful what a difference learning makes upon people even in the common intercourse of life, which does not appear to be much connected with it." "And yet, (said I) people go through the world very well, and carry on the business of life to good advantage, without learning." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that may be true in cases where learning cannot possibly be of any use; for instance, this boy rows us as well without learning, as if he could sing the song of Orpheus to the Argonauts, who were the first sailors." He then called to the boy, "What would you give, my lad, to know about the Argonauts?" "Sir, (said the boy,) I would give what I have." Johnson was much pleased with his answer, and we gave him a double fare. Dr. Johnson then turning to me, "Sir (said he) a desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind; and every human being, whose mind is not debauched, will be willing to give all that he has to get knowledge."

We landed at the Old Swan, and walked to

Billingsgate, where we took oars, and moved smoothly along the silver Thames. It was a very fine day. We were entertained with the immense number and variety of ships that were lying at anchor, and with the beautiful country on each side of the river.

I talked of preaching, and of the great success which those called Methodists have. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is owing to their expressing themselves in a plain and familiar manner, which is the only way to do good to the common people, and which clergymen of genius and learning ought to do from a principle of duty, when it is suited to their congregations; a practice, for which they will be praised by men of sense. To insist against drunkenness as a crime, because it debases reason, the noblest faculty of man, would be of no service to the common people: but to tell them that they may die in a fit of drunkenness, and shew them how dreadful that would be, cannot fail to make a deep impression. Sir, when your Scotch clergy give up their homely manner, religion will soon decay in that country." Let this observation, as Johnson meant it, be ever remembered.

I was much pleased to find myself with Johnson at Greenwich, which he celebrates in his *London* as a favorite scene. I had the poem in my pocket, and read the lines aloud with enthusiasm:

"On Thames's banks in silent thought we stood:
Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood:
Pleased with the seat which gave ELIZA birth,
We kneel, and kiss the consecrated earth."

Afterwards he entered upon the business of the day, which was to give me his advice as to a course of study. . . .

We walked in the evening in Greenwich Park. He asked me, I suppose, by way of trying my disposition, "Is not this very fine?" Having no exquisite relish of the beauties of Nature, and being more delighted with "the busy hum of men," I answered, "Yes, Sir; but not equal to Fleet-street." JOHNSON. "You are right, Sir."

I am aware that many of my readers may censure my want of taste. Let me, however, shelter myself under the authority of a very fashionable Baronet in the brilliant world, who, on his attention being called to the fragrance of a May evening in the country, observed, "This may be very well; but, for my part, I prefer the smell of a flambeau at the playhouse."

We stayed so long at Greenwich, that our sail up the river, in our return to London,

was by no means so pleasant as in the morning; for the night air was so cold that it made me shiver. I was the more sensible of it from having sat up all the night before, recollecting and writing in my journal what I thought worthy of preservation; an exertion, which, during the first part of my acquaintance with Johnson, I frequently made. I remember having sat up four nights in one week, without being much incommoded in the day time.

Johnson, whose robust frame was not in the least affected by the cold, scolded me, as if my shivering had been a paltry effeminacy, saying, "Why do you shiver?" Sir William Scott, of the Commons, told me, that when he complained of a head-ache in the post-chaise, as they were travelling together to Scotland, Johnson treated him in the same manner: "At your age, Sir, I had no head-ache."

We concluded the day at the Turk's Head coffee-house very socially. He was pleased to listen to a particular account which I gave him of my family, and of its hereditary estate, as to the extent and population of which he asked questions, and made calculations; recommending, at the same time, a liberal kindness to the tenantry, as people over whom the proprietor was placed by Providence. He took delight in hearing my description of the romantic seat of my ancestors. "I must be there, Sir, (said he) and we will live in the old castle; and if there is not a room in it remaining, we will build one. I was highly flattered, but could scarcely indulge a hope that Auchinleck would indeed be honored by his presence, and celebrated by a description, as it afterwards was, in his *Journey to the Western Islands*."

After we had again talked of my setting out for Holland, he said, "I must see thee out of England; I will accompany you to Harwich." I could not find words to express what I felt upon this unexpected and very great mark of his affectionate regard.

Next day, Sunday, July 31, I told him I had been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers, where I had heard a woman preach. JOHNSON. "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

On Tuesday, August 2 (the day of my departure from London having been fixed for the 5th,) Dr. Johnson did me the honor to pass a part of the morning with me at my Chambers. He said, that "he always felt an

inclination to do nothing." I observed, that it was strange to think that the most indolent man in Britain had written the most laborious work, *The English Dictionary*...

I had now made good my title to be a privileged man, and was carried by him in the evening to drink tea with Miss Williams, whom, though under the misfortune of having lost her sight, I found to be agreeable in conversation; for she had a variety of literature, and expressed herself well; but her peculiar value was the intimacy in which she had long lived with Johnson, by which she was well acquainted with his habits, and knew how to lead him on to talk.

After tea he carried me to what he called his walk, which was a long narrow paved court in the neighborhood, overshadowed by some trees. There we sauntered a considerable time; and I complained to him that my love of London and of his company was such, that I shrunk almost from the thought of going away, even to travel, which is generally so much desired by young men. He roused me by manly and spirited conversation. He advised me, when settled in any place abroad, to study with an eagerness after knowledge, and to apply to Greek an hour every day; and when I was moving about, to read diligently the great book of mankind.

On Wednesday, August 3, we had our last social evening at the Turk's Head coffee-house, before my setting out for foreign parts. I had the misfortune, before we parted, to irritate him unintentionally. I mentioned to him how common it was in the world to tell absurd stories of him, and to ascribe to him very strange sayings. JOHNSON. "What do they make me say, Sir?" BOSWELL. "Why, Sir, as an instance very strange indeed, (laughing heartily as I spoke,) David Hume told me, you said that you would stand before a battery of cannon, to restore the Convocation to its full powers." Little did I apprehend that he had actually said this; but I was soon convinced of my error; for, with a determined look, he thundered out "And would I not, Sir? Shall the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland have its General Assembly, and the Church of England be denied its Convocation?" He was walking up and down the room while I told him the anecdote; but when he uttered this explosion of high-church zeal, he had come close to my chair, and his eyes flashed with indignation. I bowed to the storm, and diverted the force of it, by leading him to expatiate on the influence which religion derived from maintaining the

church with great external respectability. . . .

On Friday, August 5, we set out early in the morning in the Harwich stage coach. A fat elderly gentlewoman, and a young Dutchman, seemed the most inclined among us to conversation. At the inn where we dined, the gentlewoman said that she had done her best to educate her children; and particularly that she had never suffered them to be a moment idle. JOHNSON. "I wish, madam, you would educate me too; for I have been an idle fellow all my life." "I am sure, Sir, (said she) you have not been idle." JOHNSON. "Nay, Madam, it is very true; and that gentleman there (pointing to me,) has been idle. He was idle at Edinburgh. His father sent him to Glasgow, where he continued to be idle. He then came to London, where he has been very idle; and now he is going to Utrecht, where he will be as idle as ever." I asked him privately how he could expose me so. JOHNSON. "Poh, poh! (said he) they knew nothing about you, and will think of it no more." In the afternoon the gentlewoman talked violently against the Roman Catholics, and of the horrors of the Inquisition. To the utter astonishment of all the passengers but myself, who knew that he could talk upon any side of a question, he defended the Inquisition, and maintained, that "false doctrine should be checked on its first appearance; that the civil power should unite with the church in punishing those who dared to attack the established religion, and that such only were punished by the Inquisition." He had in his pocket *Pomponius Mela de situ Orbis*, in which he read occasionally, and seemed very intent upon ancient geography. Though by no means niggardly, his attention to what was generally right was so minute, that having observed at one of the stages that I ostentatiously gave a shilling to the coachman, when the custom was for each passenger to give only six-pence, he took me aside and scolded me, saying that what I had done would make the coachman dissatisfied with all the rest of the passengers, who gave him no more than his due. This was just reprimand; for in whatever way a man may indulge his generosity or his vanity in spending his money, for the sake of others he ought not to raise the price of any article for which there is a constant demand. . . .

At supper this night he talked of good eating with uncommon satisfaction. "Some people (said he,) have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very

studiously, and very carefully; for I look upon it, that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else." He now appeared to me *Jean Bull philosophe*,¹ and he was, for the moment, not only serious but vehement. Yet I have heard him, upon other occasions, talk with great contempt of people who were anxious to gratify their palates; and the 206th number of his *Rambler* is a masterly essay against gulosity. His practice, indeed, I must acknowledge, may be considered as casting the balance of his different opinions upon this subject; for I never knew any man who relished good eating more than he did. When at table, he was totally absorbed in the business of the moment; his looks seemed rivetted to his plate; nor would he, unless when in very high company, say one word, or even pay the least attention to what was said by others, till he had satisfied his appetite, which was so fierce, and indulged with such intenseness, that while in the act of eating, the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible. To those whose sensations were delicate, this could not but be disgusting; and it was doubtless not very suitable to the character of a philosopher, who should be distinguished by self-command. But it must be owned, that Johnson, though he could be rigidly *abstemious*, was not a *temperate* man either in eating or drinking. He could refrain, but he could not use moderately. He told me, that he had fasted two days without inconvenience, and that he had never been hungry but once. They who beheld with wonder how much he eat upon all occasions when his dinner was to his taste, could not easily conceive what he must have meant by hunger; and not only was he remarkable for the extraordinary quantity which he eat, but he was, or affected to be, a man of very nice discernment in the science of cookery. He used to descant critically on the dishes which had been at table where he had dined or supped, and to recollect very minutely what he had liked. I remember, when he was in Scotland, his praising "*Gordon's palates*," (a dish of palates at the Honorable Alexander Gordon's) with a warmth of expression which might have done honor to more important subjects. "As for Maclaurin's imitation of a *made dish*, it was a wretched attempt." He about the same time was so much displeased with the performances of a nobleman's French cook, that he exclaimed with vehemence, "I'd throw

¹ John Bull as philosopher.

such a rascal into the river;" and he then proceeded to alarm a lady at whose house he was to sup, by the following manifesto of his skill: "I, Madam, who live at a variety of good tables, am a much better judge of cookery, than any person who has a very tolerable cook, but lives much at home; for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of his cook; whereas, Madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge." When invited to dine, even with an intimate friend, he was not pleased if something better than a plain dinner was not prepared for him. I have heard him say on such an occasion, "This was a good dinner enough, to be sure; but it was not a dinner to *ask* a man to." On the other hand, he was wont to express, with great glee, his satisfaction when he had been entertained quite to his mind. One day when we had dined with his neighbor and landlord in Bolt-court, Mr. Allen, the printer, whose old housekeeper had studied his taste in every thing, he pronounced this eulogy: "Sir, we could not have had a better dinner had there been a *Synod of Cooks*."

While we were left by ourselves, after the Dutchman had gone to bed, Dr. Johnson talked of that studied behavior which many have recommended and practised. He disapproved of it; and said, "I never considered whether I should be a grave man, or a merry man, but just let inclination, for the time, have its course." . . .

I teased him with fanciful apprehensions of unhappiness. A moth having fluttered round the candle, and burnt itself, he laid hold of this little incident to admonish me; saying, with a sly look, and in a solemn but quiet tone, "That creature was its own tormentor, and I believe its name was BOSWELL."

Next day we got to Harwich to dinner; and my passage in the packet-boat to Helvoetsluys being secured, and my baggage put on board, we dined at our inn by ourselves. It happened to say it would be terrible if he should not find a speedy opportunity of returning to London, and be confined to so dull a place. JOHNSON. "Don't Sir, accustom yourself to use big words for little matters. It would *not* be terrible, though I *were* to be detained some time here." . . .

We went and looked at the church, and having gone into it and walked up to the altar, Johnson, whose piety was constant and fervent, sent me to my knees, saying, "Now that you are going to leave your native country, recommend yourself to the protection of your CREATOR and REDEEMER."

After we came out of the church, we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that every thing in the universe is merely ideal. I observed, that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it, "I refute it *thus*." . . .

My revered friend walked down with me to the beach, where we embraced and parted with tenderness, and engaged to correspond by letters. I said, "I hope, Sir, you will not forget me in my absence." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, it is more likely you should forget me, than that I should forget you." As the vessel put out to sea, I kept my eyes upon him for a considerable time, while he remained rolling his majestic frame in his usual manner: and at last I perceived him walk back into the town, and he disappeared.

FROM THE YEAR 1776

I am now to record a very curious incident in Dr. Johnson's Life, which fell under my own observation; of which *pars magna fui*,¹ and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description, had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq.² Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chemistry, which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Sir John Pringle, "mine own friend and my Father's friend," between whom and Dr. Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance, as I respected and lived in intimacy with both of them, observed to me once, very ingeniously, "It is not in friendship as in mathematics where two things each equal to a third, are equal between themselves. You agree with Johnson as a middle quality, and you agree with me as a middle quality; but Johnson and I should not agree." Sir John was not sufficiently flexible; so I desisted; knowing, indeed, that the repulsion

¹ I was myself no small part.

² A radical politician and political agitator.

was equally strong on the part of Johnson; who, I know not from what cause, unless his being a Scotchman, had formed a very erroneous opinion of Sir John. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together. How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter.

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men, than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15. "Pray (said I,) let us have Dr. Johnson." — "What with Mr. Wilkes? not for the world, (said Mr. Edward Dilly:) Dr. Johnson would never forgive me." — "Come, (said I,) if you'll let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well." DILLY. "Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here."

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, Sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch." I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus: — "Mr. Dilly, Sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honor to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland." JOHNSON. "Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him —" BOSWELL. "Provided, Sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have, is agreeable to you." JOHNSON. "What do you mean, Sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" BOSWELL. "I beg your pardon, Sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, and what then? What care I for his *patriotic friends*? Poh!" BOSWELL. "I

should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there." JOHNSON. "And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to me, Sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally." BOSWELL. "Pray forgive me, Sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me." Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much-expected Wednesday, I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffetting his books, as upon a former occasion, covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad. "How is this, Sir? (said I.) Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr. Dilly's?" JOHNSON. "Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's: it went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs. Williams." BOSWELL. "But, my dear Sir, you know you were engaged to Mr. Dilly, and I told him so. He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come." JOHNSON. "You must talk to Mrs. Williams about this."

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to shew Mrs. Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him; and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir. I hastened down stairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr. Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr. Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home. "Yes, Sir, (said she, pretty peevishly,) Dr. Johnson is to dine at home." — "Madam, (said I,) his respect for you is such, that I know he will not leave you unless you absolutely desire it. But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forego it for a day; as Mr. Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr. Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to-day. And then, Madam, be pleased to consider my situation; I carried the message, and I assured Mr. Dilly that Dr. Johnson was to come, and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a

¹ A famous public executioner of the seventeenth century, whose name was later applied to any hangman.

company, and boasted of the honor he expected to have. I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there." She gradually softened to my solicitations, which were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr. Johnson, "That all things considered, she thought he should certainly go." I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event, "indifferent in his choice to go or stay;" but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs. Williams' consent, he roared, "Frank,¹ a clean shirt," and was very soon drest. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna-Green.

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, Sir?" — "Mr. Arthur Lee." — JOHNSON. "Too, too, too," (under his breath,) which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot* but an *American*. He was afterwards minister from the United States at the court of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?" — "Mr. Wilkes, Sir." This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he no doubt recollected his having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he, therefore, resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table," dissolved his reverie, and we all sat down without any symptom of ill humor. There were present, beside Mr. Wilkes, and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physic at Edinburgh, Mr. (now Sir John) Miller, Dr. Lettson, and Mr. Slater the druggist. Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness, that he gained upon him in-

¹ Francis Barber, Johnson's negro servant.

sensibly. No man eat more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, Sir: — It is better here — A little of the brown — Some fat, Sir — A little of the stuffing — Some gravy — Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter — Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange; — or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest." — "Sir, Sir, I am obliged to you, Sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue," but, in a short while, of complacency.

Foote,¹ being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimic." One of the company added, "A merry Andrew, a buffoon." JOHNSON. "But he has wit too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading; he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands; but he's gone, Sir, when you think you have got him — like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free." WILKES. "Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's." JOHNSON. "The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, Sir, he was irresistible. He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer; but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little

¹ Samuel Foote, dramatist and actor.

black boy, who was rather a favorite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs, he told them, "This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer."

Somebody observed that Garrick could not have done this. WILKES. "Garrick would have made the small-beer still smaller. He is now leaving the stage; but he will play *Scrub* all his life." I knew that Johnson would let nobody attack Garrick but himself, as Garrick once said to me, and I had heard him praise his liberality; so to bring out his commendation of his celebrated pupil, I said, loudly, "I have heard Garrick is liberal." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views. Garrick was very poor when he began life; so when he came to have money, he probably was very unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could; and I am of opinion, the reputation of avarice which he has had, has been very lucky for him, and prevented his having many enemies. You despise a man for avarice, but do not hate him. Garrick might have been much better attacked for living with more splendor than is suitable to a player; if they had had the wit to have assailed him in that quarter, they might have galled him more. But they have kept clamoring about his avarice, which has rescued him from much obloquy and envy."

Talking of the great difficulty of obtaining authentic information for biography, Johnson told us, "When I was a young fellow I wanted to write the *Life of Dryden*, and in order to get materials, I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him; these were old Swinney, and old Cibber. Swinney's information was no more than this, 'That at Will's coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter-chair; and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was then called his summer-chair.' Cibber could

tell no more but 'That he remembered him a decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's.' You are to consider that Cibber was then at a great distance from Dryden, had perhaps one leg only in the room, and durst not draw in the other." BOSWELL. "Yet Cibber was a man of observation?" JOHNSON. "I think not." BOSWELL. "You will allow his *Apology* to be well done." JOHNSON. "Very well done, to be sure, Sir. That book is a striking proof of the justice of Pope's remark:

'Each might his several province well command
Would all but stoop to what they understand.'"

BOSWELL. "And his plays are good." JOHNSON. "Yes; but that was his trade; *l'esprit du corps*: he had been all his life among players and play-writers. I wondered that he had so little to say in conversation, for he had kept the best company, and learnt all that can be got by the ear. He abused Pindar to me, and then shewed me an Ode of his own, with an absurd couplet, making a linnet soar on an eagle's wing. I told him that when the ancients made a simile, they always made it like something real."

Mr. Wilkes remarked, that "among all the bold flights of Shakespeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnam-wood march to Dunsinane; creating a wood where there never was a shrub; a wood in Scotland! ha! ha! ha!" And he also observed, that "the clannish slavery of the Highlands of Scotland was the single exception to Milton's remark of 'The Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty,' being worshipped in all hilly countries." — "When I was at Inverary (said he,) on a visit to my old friend, Archibald, Duke of Argyle, his dependents congratulated me on being such a favorite of his Grace. I said, 'It is then, gentlemen, truly lucky for me; for if I had displeased the Duke, and he had wished it, there is not a Campbell among you but would have been ready to bring John Wilkes's head to him in a charger. It would have been only

'Off with his head! So much for Aylesbury.'

I was then member for Aylesbury." . . .

Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, all barrenness is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren." BOSWELL. "Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, Sir, and say if you did

not see meat and drink enough there." JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home." All these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which showed that he meant only wit. Upon this topic he and Mr. Wilkes could perfectly assimilate; here was a bond of union between them, and I was conscious that as both of them had visited Caledonia, both were fully satisfied of the strange narrow ignorance of those who imagine that it is a land of famine. But they amused themselves with persevering in the old jokes. When I claimed a superiority for Scotland over England in one respect, that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him; but there must first be the judgement of a court of law ascertaining its justice; and that a seizure of the person, before judgement is obtained, can take place only, if his creditor should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditatione fugæ*: WILKES. "That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation." JOHNSON. (to Mr. Wilkes,) "You must know, Sir, I lately took my friend Boswell and shewed him genuine civilized life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility: for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London." WILKES. "Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me." JOHNSON. (smiling,) "And we ashamed of him."

They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his asking Mrs. Macaulay to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of mankind; and he said to me afterwards, with a nod of satisfaction, "You saw Mr. Wilkes acquiesced." Wilkes talked with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the Attorney-General, *Diabolus Regis*;¹ adding, "I have reason to know something about that officer; for I was prosecuted

¹ the king's devil.

for a libel." Johnson, who many people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, *indeed*, "a good-humored fellow."

After dinner we had an accession of Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker lady, well known for her various talents, and of Mr. Alderman Lee. Amidst some patriotic groans, somebody (I think the Alderman) said, "Poor old England is lost." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that Old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it." WILKES. "Had Lord Bute governed Scotland only, I should not have taken the trouble to write his eulogy, and dedicate *Mortimer* to him."²

Mr. Wilkes held a candle to shew a fine print of a beautiful female figure which hung in the room, and pointed out the elegant contour of the bosom with the finger of an arch connoisseur. He afterwards, in a conversation with me, waggishly insisted, that all the time Johnson shewed visible signs of a fervent admiration of the corresponding charms of the fair Quaker.

This record, though by no means so perfect as I could wish, will serve to give a notion of a very curious interview, which was not only pleasing at the time, but had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity, and sweetening any acidity, which in the various bustle of political contest, had been produced in the minds of two men, who though widely different, had so many things in common — classical learning, modern literature, wit, and humor, and ready repartee — that it would have been much to be regretted if they had been forever at a distance from each other.

Mr. Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negotiation*; and pleasantly said, that "there was nothing to equal it in the whole history of the *Corps Diplomatique*."

I attended Dr. Johnson home, and had the satisfaction to hear him tell Mrs. Williams how much he had been pleased with Mr. Wilkes's company, and what an agreeable day he had passed.

² The eulogy and dedication were ironical attacks.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774)

Goldsmith is one of the most versatile of English authors. He died at the age of forty-six, and his serious work as a man of letters did not begin till he was over thirty; but during these fifteen years he produced masterpieces in four different types of writing. *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) is one of the most delightful comedies in the language; *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), though inferior to the work of Fielding and of Smollett, is probably the best known novel of the eighteenth century; *The Citizen of the World* (1760-61) is one of the most brilliant collections of witty, satirical essays; *The Traveller* (1764) and *The Deserted Village* (1770) are masterpieces of reflective and descriptive poetry.

Goldsmith found his true vocation as an author only after false starts at all the other professions. Born in Ireland, the son of a country clergyman of the English Church, he spent his boyhood in the village of Lissoy (later idealized as the "Auburn" of *The Deserted Village*), and was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he was in frequent hot water with the college authorities. He was first intended for the Church, decided next to study law, and finally at the age of twenty-four actually studied medicine, first at Edinburgh, later at Leyden. After a penniless tour of the Continent which lasted a full year, a journey made for the most part on foot, he came to London in 1756, where he made for the next half-dozen years a precarious living by hack-writing, by teaching in a boys' school, and by a most desultory practice of his profession as a doctor. In 1761, he met Dr. Johnson, whose warm friendship seems to have given to his vagabond genius the discipline and intellectual fibre necessary to sustained literary effort.

As a poet, Goldsmith held to the tradition of Dryden and Pope. With Johnson, he was a bitter enemy of blank verse and of the Pindaric ode as practiced by Gray. But his use of the heroic couplet is different from that of Pope. There is less of antithesis and balance, and the sense flows more freely from one couplet to the next. *The Deserted Village* is a didactic poem. Pope would have called it a "Moral Essay on Wealth and Population"; but Goldsmith has made the descriptive dominate over the argumentative. He has given to it a tone of kindly tenderness and reminiscent sadness which is in sharp contrast with the epigrammatic brilliance of Pope.

Goldsmith's works have been frequently republished. A good biography is that of Austin Dobson in the Great Writers Series.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

DEAR SIR, — I can have no expectations in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest therefore aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to inquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion) that the depopulation it deplores is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarce make any other answer, than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all

possible pains in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege; and that all my views and inquiries have led me to believe those miseries real which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an inquiry, whether the country be depopulating or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries; and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages; and all the wisdom of antiquity, in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right.

I am, dear sir, your sincere friend, and
ardent admirer,

Desired OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the labor-
ing swain,

Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms
delayed:

Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease, 5
Seats of my youth, when every sport could
please:

How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each
scene!

How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm, 10
The never failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighbor-
ing hill,

The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the
shade,

For talking age and whispering lovers made!

How often have I blest the coming day, 15
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading
tree;

While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old sur-
veyed; 20

And many a gambol frolicked o'er the
ground,

And sleights of art and feats of strength went
round.

And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought re-
nown, 25

By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain, mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks
reprove. 30

These were thy charms, sweet village! sports
like these,

With sweet succession taught even toil to
please;

These round thy bowers their cheerful influ-
ence shed,

These were thy charms — but all these
charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the
lawn, 35

Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms with-
drawn;

Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:

One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain; 40
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But choked with sedges works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;

Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies, 45
And tires thy echoes with unvaried cries.
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering
wall;

And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's
hand, 49

Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has
made:

But a bold peasantry, their country's
pride, 55

When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs
began,

When every rood of ground maintained its
man;

For him light labor spread her wholesome
store,

Just gave what life required, but gave no
more: 60

His best companions, innocence and health,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered; trade's unfeeling
train

Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets
rose, 65

Unwieldy wealth, and cumbrous pomp re-
pose;

And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.

Those gentle hours that plenty bade to
bloom,

Those calm desires that asked but little
room, 70

Those healthful sports that graced the peace-
ful scene,

Lived in each look, and brightened all the
green;

These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet AUBURN! parent of the blissful
hour, 75

Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's
power.

Here, as I take my solitary rounds,

Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined
grounds,

And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn
grew, 80

Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to
pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of
care,

In all my griefs — and God has given my
share —

I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown, 85
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned
skill, 90

Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;

And as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,

Pants to the place from whence at first she
flew,

I still had hopes, my long vexations past, 95
Here to return — and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns, in shades like
these,

A youth of labor with an age of ease; 100
Who quits a world where strong temptations
try,

And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous
deep;

No surly porter stands, in guilty state, 105
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;
Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
While Resignation gently slopes the way; 110
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His Heaven commences ere the world be
past.

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's
close

Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I past with careless steps and
slow, 115

The mingling notes came softened from
below;

The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their
young;

The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,

The playful children just let loose from
school, 120

The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whis-
pering wind,

And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant
mind;

These all in sweet confusion sought the
shade,

And filled each pause the nightingale had
made.

But now the sounds of population fail, 125
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway
tread,

But all the bloomy flush of life is fled;
All but yon widowed solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced, in age, for
bread, 131

To strip the brook with mantling cresses
spread,

To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train, 135
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden
smiled,

And still where many a garden flower grows
wild,

There, where a few torn shrubs the place
disclose,

The village preacher's modest mansion
rose. 140

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change
his place;

Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power, 145
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to
rise.

His house was known to all the vagrant
train,

He chid their wanderings, but relieved their
pain; 150

The long remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged
breast;

The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims
allowed;

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay, 155
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and shewed how fields
were won.

Pleased with his guests, the good man learned
to glow,

And quite forgot their vices in their woe; 160
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt, at every call, 165
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for
all:

And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the
skies,

He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the
way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dis-
mayed,

The reverend champion stood. At his con-
trol

Despair and anguish fled the struggling
soul;

Comfort came down the trembling wretch to
raise, 175

And his last faltering accents whispered
praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;

Truth from his lips prevailed with double
sway,

And fools, who came to scoff, remained to
pray. 180

The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran:

E'en children followed, with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good
man's smile.

His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares
distrest; 186

To them his heart, his love, his griefs were
given,

But all his serious thoughts had rest in
heaven.

As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the
storm, 190

Though round its breast the rolling clouds
are spread,

Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the
way

With blossomed furze, unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to
rule, 195

The village master taught his little school:

A man severe he was, and stern to view,

I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face; 200
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he
frowned;

Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught, 205
The love he bore to learning was in fault;

The village all declared how much he knew,
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides
presage,

And even the story ran that he could
gauge: 210

In arguing too, the parson owned his skill,
For even though vanquished, he could argue
still;

While words of learned length and thunder-
ing sound

Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder
grew 215

That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot,
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing
eye, 220

Low lies that house where nut-brown
draughts inspired,

Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil
retired,

Where village statesmen talked with looks
profound,

And news much older than their ale went
round.

Imagination fondly stoops to trace 225

The parlor splendors of that festive place;
The whitewashed wall, the nicely sanded
floor,

The varnished clock that clicked behind the
door:

The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day; 230

The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of
goose;

The hearth, except when winter chilled the
day,

With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel
gay;

While broken teacups, wisely kept for
show, 235

Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain transitory splendors! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?

Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's
heart; 240

Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall
clear, 245

Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to
hear;

The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its
play, 255

The soul adopts, and owns their first-born
sway;

Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.

But the long pomp, the midnight masquer-
ade,

With all the freaks of wanton wealth
arrayed, 260

In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, even while fashion's brightest arts
decoy,

The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy?

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who
survey 265

The rich man's joys increase, the poor's
decay,

'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.

Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted
ore,

And shouting Folly hails them from her
shore; 270

Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a
name,

That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and
pride 275

Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended
bounds,

Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half
their growth; 280

His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land, adorned for pleasure all,
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall. 286

As some fair female, unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her
reign,

Slights every borrowed charm that dress
supplies,

Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are past, for charms
are frail, 291

When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress:

Thus fares the land, by luxury betrayed, 295
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed:
But verging to decline, its splendors rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;

While, scourged by famine, from the smiling
land,

The mournful peasant leads his humble
band; 300

And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms — a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?

If to some common's fenceless limits strayed,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty
blade, 306

Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth
divide,

And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped — What waits him
there?

To see profusion that he must not share; 310
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined

To pamper luxury, and thin mankind:

To see those joys the sons of pleasure know,
Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woe.

Here, while the courtier glitters in bro-
cade, 315

There the pale artist ¹ plies the sickly trade;
Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomp
display,

There the black gibbet glooms beside the
way;

The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight
reign,

Here, richly decked, admits the gorgeous
train; 320

Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing
square,

The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!

Sure these denote one universal joy!

Are these thy serious thoughts? — Ah, turn
thine eyes ³²⁵

Where the poor houseless shivering female
lies:

She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distress;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the
thorn; ³³⁰

Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from
the shower,

With heavy heart, deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town, ³³⁵
She left her wheel and robes of country
brown.

Do thine, sweet AUBURN, thine, the love-
liest train,

Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?

Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little
bread! ³⁴⁰

Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary
scene,

Where half the convex world intrudes be-
tween,

Though torrid tracts with fainting steps they
go,

Where wild Altama's murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charmed
before, ³⁴⁵

The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward
ray,

And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to
sing,

But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling; ³⁵⁰
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance
crowned,

Where the dark scorpion gathers death
around:

Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;

Where crouching tigers wait their hapless
prey, ³⁵⁵

And savage men more murderous still than
they:

While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the
skies.

Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove, ³⁶¹
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

I A river in Georgia.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloomed that
parting day,

That called them from their native walks
away;

When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, ³⁶⁵
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked
their last,

And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to
weep. ³⁷⁰

The good old sire the first prepared to go,
To new-found worlds, and wept for others'
woe;

But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears, ³⁷⁵
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.

With louder plaints the mother spoke her
woes,

And blest the cot where every pleasure rose;
And kissed her thoughtless babes with many
a tear, ³⁸¹

And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly
dear;

Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief. ³⁸⁴

O Luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for
thee!

How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigor not their own: ³⁹⁰
At every draught more large and large they
grow,

A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapped their strength, and every part
unsound,

Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin
round.

Even now the devastation is begun, ³⁹⁵
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I
stand,

I see the rural Virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads
the sail,

That idly waiting flaps with every gale, ⁴⁰⁰
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the
strand.

Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness are there;
And piety with wishes placed above, ⁴⁰⁵

And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
 And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
 Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
 Unfit in these degenerate times of shame,
 To catch the heart, or strike for honest
 fame;

Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
 My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
 Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
 That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st
 me so;

Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel,
 Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee
 well;

Farewell! and O! where'er thy voice be tried,
 On Torno's cliffs,¹ or Pambamarca's² side,
 Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
 Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,⁴²⁰
 Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
 Redress the rigors of the inclement clime;
 Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
 Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
 Teach him, that states of native strength
 possess,

Though very poor, may still be very blest;
 That trade's proud empire hastes to swift
 decay,

As ocean sweeps the labored mole away;
 While self-dependent power can time defy,
 As rocks resist the billows and the sky.³ 430
 1770.

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG

Good people all, of every sort,
 Give ear unto my song;
 And if you find it wondrous short, —
 It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man,
 Of whom the world might say,
 That still a godly race he ran, —
 Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
 To comfort friends and foes;
 The naked every day he clad, —
 When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
 As many dogs there be,
 Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound, 15
 And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends;
 But when a pique began,
 The dog, to gain his private ends,
 Went mad, and bit the man. 20

Around from all the neighboring streets
 The wondering neighbors ran,
 And swore the dog had lost his wits,
 To bite so good a man.

The wound it seemed both sore and sad 25
 To every Christian eye;
 And, while they swore the dog was mad,
 They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
 That showed the rogues they lied; 30
 The man recovered of the bite,
 The dog it was that died.

1766.

STANZAS ON WOMAN

From THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD

When lovely Woman stoops to folly,
 And finds too late that men betray,
 What charm can soothe her melancholy,
 What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover, 5
 To hide her shame from every eye,
 To give repentance to her lover,
 And wring his bosom — is, to die.
 1766.

THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

The Citizen of the World (1760–61) is a series of essays which first appeared in *The Public Ledger* with the title of "Chinese Letters." The letters are supposed to be written to friends in the Orient by a Chinese philosopher resident in London, who is interested and puzzled by the strange ways of European civilization. This device of looking at Europe through Oriental eyes was popularized for the eighteenth century by the *Lettres Persanes* of Montesquieu. In the tone of his satire, Goldsmith continues the tradition of Addison and Steele, whom he surpasses in genial kindliness.

LETTER XXI

At the Play-house

The English are as fond of seeing plays acted as the Chinese; but there is a vast difference in the manner of conducting them. We play our pieces in the open air, the English theirs under cover; we act by daylight, they by the blaze of torches. One of our plays continues eight or ten days successively;

¹ In Sweden. ² A mountain in Ecuador.

³ The last four lines of the poem were written by Dr. Johnson.

an English piece seldom takes up above four hours in the representation.

My companion in black, with whom I am now beginning to contract an intimacy, introduced me a few nights ago to the play-house, where we placed ourselves conveniently at the foot of the stage. As the curtain was not drawn before my arrival, I had an opportunity of observing the behavior of the spectators, and indulging those reflections which novelty generally inspires.

The rich in general were placed in the lowest seats, and the poor rose above them in degrees proportioned to their poverty. The order of precedence seemed here inverted; those who were undermost all the day, now enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies. It was they who called for the music, indulging every noisy freedom, and testifying all the insolence of beggary in exaltation.

They who held the middle region seemed not so riotous as those above them, nor yet so tame as those below: to judge by their looks, many of them seemed strangers there as well as myself; they were chiefly employed, during this period of expectation, in eating oranges, reading the story of the play, or making ascriptions.

Those who sat in the lowest rows, which are called the pit, seemed to consider themselves as judges of the merits of the poet and the performers; they were assembled partly to be amused, and partly to show their taste; appearing to labor under that restraint which an affectation of superior discernment generally produces. My companion, however, informed me, that not one in a hundred of them knew even the first principles of criticism: that they assumed the right of being censors because there was none to contradict their pretensions; and that every man who now called himself a connoisseur, became such to all intents and purposes.

Those who sat in the boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came merely for their own amusement; these rather to furnish out a part of the entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in dumb show — not a courtesy or a nod, that was not the result of art; not a look nor a smile that was not designed for murder. Gentlemen and ladies ogled each other through spectacles; for my companion observed, that blindness was of late become fashionable; all affected indifference and ease, while their hearts at the same time

burned for conquest. Upon the whole, the lights, the music, the ladies in their gayest dresses, the men with cheerfulness and expectation in their looks, all conspired to make a most agreeable picture, and to fill a heart that sympathizes at human happiness with inexpressible serenity.

The expected time for the play to begin at last arrived; the curtain was drawn, and the actors came on. A woman, who personated a queen, came in courtseying to the audience, who clapped their hands upon her appearance. Clapping of hands is, it seems, the manner of applauding in England; the manner is absurd, but every country, you know, has its peculiar absurdities. I was equally surprised, however, at the submission of the actress, who should have considered herself as a queen, as at the little discernment of the audience who gave her such marks of applause before she attempted to deserve them. Preliminaries between her and the audience being thus adjusted, the dialogue was supported between her and a most hopeful youth, who acted the part of her confidant. They both appeared in extreme distress, for it seems the queen had lost a child some fifteen years before, and still keeps its dear resemblance next to her heart, while her kind companion bore a part in her sorrows.

Her lamentations grew loud; comfort is offered, but she detests the very sound: she bids them preach comfort to the winds. Upon this her husband comes in, who, seeing the queen so much afflicted, can himself hardly refrain from tears, or avoid partaking in the soft distress. After thus grieving through three scenes, the curtain dropped for the first act.

"Truly," said I to my companion; "these kings and queens are very much disturbed at no very great misfortune: certain I am, were people of humbler stations to act in this manner, they would be thought divested of common sense." I had scarce finished this observation, when the curtain rose, and the king came on in a violent passion. His wife had, it seems, refused his proffered tenderness, had spurned his royal embrace; and he seemed resolved not to survive her fierce disdain. After he had thus fretted, and the queen had fretted through the second act, the curtain was let down once more.

"Now," says my companion, "you perceive the king to be a man of spirit; he feels at every pore: one of your phlegmatic sons of clay would have given the queen her own way, and let her come to herself by degrees;

but the king is for immediate tenderness, or instant death: death and tenderness are leading passions of every modern buskined hero; this moment they embrace, and the next stab, mixing daggers and kisses in every period."

I was going to second his remarks, when my attention was engrossed by a new object: a man came in balancing a straw upon his nose, and the audience were clapping their hands in all the raptures of applause. "To what purpose," cried I, "does this unmeaning figure make his appearance? is he a part of the plot?" "Unmeaning, do you call him?" replied my friend in black; "this is one of the most important characters of the whole play; nothing pleases the people more than seeing a straw balanced: there is a great deal of meaning in the straw; there is something suited to every apprehension in the sight; and a fellow possessed of talents like these is sure of making his fortune."

The third act now began with an actor who came to inform us that he was the villain of the play, and intended to show strange things before all was over. He was joined by another, who seemed as much disposed for mischief as he; their intrigues continued through this whole division. "If that be a villain," said I, "he must be a very stupid one to tell his secrets without being asked; such soliloquies of late are never admitted in China."

The noise of clapping interrupted me once more; a child of six years old was learning to dance on the stage, which gave the ladies and mandarins infinite satisfaction. "I am sorry," said I, "to see the pretty creature so early learning so bad a trade; dancing being, I presume, as contemptible here as in China." "Quite the reverse," interrupted my companion, "dancing is a very reputable and genteel employment here; men have a greater chance for encouragement from the merit of their heels than their heads: One who jumps up and flourishes his toes three times before he comes to the ground, may have three hundred a-year; he who flourishes them four times, gets four hundred; but he who arrives at five is inestimable, and may demand what salary he thinks proper. The female dancers, too, are valued for this sort of jumping and crossing; and it is a cant word among them, that she deserves most who shows highest. But the fourth act is begun; let us be attentive."

In the fourth act the queen finds her long-lost child, now grown up into a youth of

smart parts and great qualifications; wherefore she wisely considers that the crown will fit his head better than that of her husband whom she knows to be a driveller. The king discovers her design, and here comes on the deep distress: he loves the queen, and he loves the kingdom; he resolves, therefore, in order to possess both, that her son must die. The queen exclaims at his barbarity, is frantic with rage, and at length, overcome with sorrow, falls into a fit; upon which the curtain drops, and the act is concluded.

"Observe the art of the poet," cries my companion. "When the queen can say no more, she falls into a fit. While thus her eyes are shut, while she is supported in the arms of her Abigail, what horrors do we not fancy! We feel it in every nerve: take my word for it, that fits are the true aposiopesis of modern tragedy."

The fifth act began, and a busy piece it was. Scenes shifting, trumpets sounding, mobs hallooing, carpets spreading, guards bustling from one door to another: gods, demons, daggers, racks, and ratsbane. But whether the king was killed, or the queen was drowned, or the son poisoned, I have absolutely forgotten.

When the play was over, I could not avoid observing, that the persons of the drama appeared in as much distress in the first act as the last: "How is it possible," said I, "to sympathize with them through five long acts! Pity is but a short-lived passion; I hate to hear an actor mouthing trifles; neither startings, strainings, nor attitudes affect me, unless there be cause: after I have been once or twice deceived by those unmeaning alarms, my heart sleeps in peace, probably unaffected by the principal distress. There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as the poet; all the rest should be subordinate, and only contribute to make that the greater; if the actor, therefore, exclaims upon every occasion in the tones of despair, he attempts to move us too soon; he anticipates the blow, he ceases to affect, though he gains our applause."

I scarcely perceived that the audience were almost all departed; wherefore mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street; where, essaying an hundred obstacles from coach-wheels and palanquin poles, like birds in their flight through the branches of a forest, after various turnings we both at length got home in safety. Adieu.

LETTER LI

The Bookseller

As I was yesterday seated at breakfast, over a pensive dish of tea, my meditations were interrupted by my old friend and companion, who introduced a stranger, dressed pretty much like himself. The gentleman made several apologies for his visit, begged of me to impute his intrusion to the sincerity of his respect, and the warmth of his curiosity.

As I am very suspicious of my company when I find them very civil without any apparent reason, I answered the stranger's caresses at first with reserve; which my friend perceiving, instantly let me into my visitant's trade and character, asking Mr. Fudge, whether he had lately published any thing new? I now conjectured that my guest was no other than a bookseller, and his answer confirmed my suspicions.

"Excuse me, Sir," says he, "it is not the season; books have their time as well as cucumbers. I would no more bring out a new work in summer, than I would sell pork in the dog-days. Nothing in my way goes off in summer, except very light goods indeed. A review, a magazine, or a sessions' paper, may amuse a summer reader; but all our stock of value we reserve for a spring and winter trade." "I must confess, Sir," says I, "a curiosity to know what you call a valuable stock, which can only bear a winter perusal."

"Sir," replied the bookseller, "it is not my way to cry up my own goods; but, without exaggeration, I will venture to show with any of the trade: my books at least have the peculiar advantage of being always new; and it is my way to clear off my old to the trunk-makers every season. I have ten new title-pages now about me, which only want books to be added to make them the finest things in nature. Others may pretend to direct the vulgar: I always let the vulgar direct me; wherever popular clamor arises, I always echo the million. For instance, should the people in general say, that such a man is a rogue, I instantly give orders to set him down in print a villain; thus every man buys the book, not to learn new sentiments, but to have the pleasure of seeing his own reflected."

"But, Sir," interrupted I, "you speak as if you yourself wrote the books you published; may I be so bold as to ask a sight of some of those intended publications which are shortly to surprise the world?" "As to that, Sir," replied the talkative bookseller, "I only draw out the plans myself; and though I am very

cautious of communicating them to any, yet, as in the end I have a favor to ask, you shall see a few of them. Here, Sir, here they are; diamonds of the first water, I assure you.

Imprimis, a translation of several medical precepts for the use of such physicians as do not understand Latin. *Item*, the young clergyman's art of placing patches regularly, with a dissertation on the different manners of smiling without distorting the face. *Item*, the whole art of love made perfectly easy, by a broker of 'Change Alley. *Item*, the proper manner of cutting black-lead pencils, and making crayons; by the Right Hon. the Earl of ***. *Item*, the muster-master-general, or the review of reviews — "Sir," cried I, interrupting him, "my curiosity, with regard to title-pages, is satisfied; I should be glad to see some longer manuscript, a history or an epic poem." "Bless me," cries the man of industry, "now you speak of an epic poem, you shall see an excellent farce. Here it is; dip into it where you will, it will be found replete with true modern humor. Strokes, Sir; it is filled with strokes of wit and satire in every line." "Do you call these dashes of the pen strokes," replied I, "for I must confess I can see no other?" "And pray, Sir," returned he, "what do you call them? Do you see any thing good now-a-days, that is not filled with strokes — and dashes? — Sir, a well-placed dash makes half the wit of our writers of modern humor. I bought a piece last season that had no other merit upon earth than nine hundred and ninety-five breaks, seventy-two ha ha's, three good things, and a garter. And yet it played off, and bounced, and cracked, and made more sport than a fire work." "I fancy, then, Sir, you were a considerable gainer?" "It must be owned the piece did pay; but, upon the whole, I cannot much boast of last winter's success: I gained by two murders; but then I lost by an ill-timed charity sermon. I was a considerable sufferer by my Direct Road to an Estate, but the Infernal Guide brought me up again. Ah, Sir, that was a piece touched off by the hand of a master; filled with good things from one end to the other. The author had nothing but the jest in view; no dull moral lurking beneath, nor ill-natured satire to sour the reader's good-humor; he wisely considered, that moral and humor at the same time were quite overdoing the business." "To what purpose was the book then published?" cried I. "Sir, the book was published in order to be sold; and no book sold better, except the criticisms upon it,

which came out soon after: of all kinds of writings, that goes off best at present; and I generally fasten a criticism upon every selling book that is published.

"I once had an author who never left the least opening for the critics! close was the word, always very right, and very dull, ever on the safe side of an argument; yet with all his qualifications, incapable of coming into favor. I soon perceived that his bent was for criticism; and, as he was good for nothing else, supplied him with pens and paper, and planted him at the beginning of every month as a censor on the works of others. In short, I found him a treasure; no merit could escape him: but what is most remarkable of all, he ever wrote best and bitterest when drunk."

"But are there not some works," interrupted I, "that, from the very manner of their composition, must be exempt from criticism; particularly such as profess to disregard its laws?" "There is no work whatsoever but he can criticise," replied the bookseller; "even though you wrote in Chinese, he would have a pluck at you. Suppose you should take it into your head to publish a book, let it be a volume of Chinese letters, for instance; write how you will, he shall show the world you could have written better. Should you, with the most local exactness, stick to the manners and customs of the country from whence you come; should you confine yourself to the narrow limits of Eastern knowledge, and be perfectly simple, and perfectly natural, he has then the strongest reason to exclaim. He may with a sneer send you back to China for readers. He may observe, that after the first or second letter, the iteration of the same simplicity is insupportably tedious: but the worst of all is, the public in such a case will anticipate his censures, and leave you, with all your un instructive simplicity, to be mauled at discretion."

"Yes," cried I, "but in order to avoid his indignation, and what I should fear more that of the public, I would, in such a case, write with all the knowledge I was master of. As I am not possessed of much learning, at least I would not suppress what little I had; nor would I appear more stupid than nature has made me." "Here, then," cries the bookseller, "we should have you entirely in our power: unnatural, uneastern; quite out of character; erroneously sensible, — would be the whole cry: Sir, we should then hunt you down like a rat." "Head of my father!" said I, "sure there are but two ways; the door must either be shut, or it must be open. It

must either be natural or unnatural." "Be what you will, we shall criticise you," returned the bookseller, "and prove you a dunce in spite of your teeth. But, Sir, it is time that I should come to business. I have just now in the press a history of China; and if you will but put your name to it as the author, I shall repay the obligations with gratitude." "What, Sir," replied I, "put my name to a work which I have not written! Never, while I retain a proper respect for the public and myself." The bluntness of my reply quite abated the ardor of the bookseller's conversation; and after about half an hour's disagreeable reserve, he, with some ceremony, took his leave, and withdrew. Adieu.

LETTER LIV

The Character of Beau Tibbs

Though naturally pensive, yet I am fond of gay company, and take every opportunity of thus dismissing the mind from duty. From this motive, I am often found in the centre of a crowd; and wherever pleasure is to be sold, am always a purchaser. In those places, without being remarked by any, I join in whatever goes forward; work my passions into a similitude of frivolous earnestness, shout as they shout, and condemn as they happen to disapprove. A mind thus sunk for a while below its natural standard, is qualified for stronger flights, as those first retire who would spring forward with greater vigor.

Attracted by the serenity of the evening, my friend and I lately went to gaze upon the company in one of the public walks near the city. Here we sauntered together for some time, either praising the beauty of such as were handsome, or the dresses of such as had nothing else to recommend them. We had gone thus deliberately forward for some time, when, stopping on a sudden, my friend caught me by the elbow, and led me out of the public walk. I could perceive by the quickness of his pace, and by his frequently looking behind, that he was attempting to avoid somebody who followed: we now turned to the right, then to the left, as we went forward he still went faster, but in vain; the person whom he attempted to escape hunted us through every doubling, and gained upon us each moment: so that at last we fairly stood still, resolving to face what we could not avoid.

Our pursuer soon came up, and joined us

with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. "My dear Drybone," cries he, shaking my friend's hand, "where have you been hiding this half a century? Positively I had fancied you were gone to cultivate matrimony and your estate in the country." During the reply, I had an opportunity of surveying the appearance of our new companion: his hat was pinched up with peculiar smartness; his looks were pale, thin, and sharp; round his neck he wore a broad black riband, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass; his coat was trimmed with tarnished twist; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt; and his stockings of silk, though newly washed, were grown yellow by long service. I was so much engaged with the peculiarity of his dress, that I attended only to the latter part of my friend's reply, in which he complimented Mr. Tibbs on the taste of his clothes, and the bloom in his countenance: "Pshaw, pshaw, Will," cried the figure, "no more of that, if you love me: you know I hate flattery, on my soul I do; and yet, to be sure, an intimacy with the great will improve one's appearance, and a course of venison will fatten; and yet, faith, I despise the great as much as you do; but there are a great many damned honest fellows among them; and we must not quarrel with one half, because the other wants breeding. If they were all such as my Lord Mudler, one of the most good-natured creatures that ever squeezed a lemon, I should myself be among the number of their admirers. I was yesterday to dine at the Duchess of Piccadilly's. My lord was there. Ned, says he to me, Ned, says he, I'll hold gold to silver, I can tell where you were poaching last night. Poaching, my lord, says I; faith you have missed already; for I staid at home, and let the girls poach for me. That's my way; I take a fine woman as some animals do their prey—stand still, and swoop, they fall into my mouth."

"Ah, Tibbs, thou art a happy fellow," cried my companion, with looks of infinite pity; "I hope your fortune is as much improved as your understanding in such company?" "Improved," replied the other; "you shall know, — but let it go no farther, — a great secret — five hundred a-year to begin with. — My lord's word of honor for it — his lordship took me down in his own chariot yesterday, and we had a *tête-à-tête* dinner in the country, where we talked of nothing else." "I fancy you forget, Sir," cried I, "you told us but this moment of your dining yesterday in town." "Did I say so?" re-

plied he coolly; "to be sure if I said so, it was so — dined in town: egad, now I do remember, I did dine in town, but I dined in the country too; for you must know, my boys, I eat two dinners. By the bye, I am grown as nice as the devil in my eating. I'll tell you a pleasant affair about that: We were a select party of us to dine at Lady Grogram's, an affected piece, but let it go no farther; a secret: well, there happened to be no assa-fœtida in the sauce to a turkey, upon which, says I, I'll hold a thousand guineas, and say, done first, that — but dear Drybone, you are an honest creature, lend me half-a-crown for a minute or two, or so, just till — but hearkee, ask me for it the next time we meet, or it may be twenty to one but I forget to pay you."

When he left us, our conversation naturally turned upon so extraordinary a character. "His very dress," cries my friend, "is not less extraordinary than his conduct. If you meet him this day, you find him in rags; if the next, in embroidery. With those persons of distinction of whom he talks so familiarly, he has scarcely a coffee-house acquaintance. However, both for the interests of society, and perhaps for his own, Heaven has made him poor, and while all the world perceive his wants, he fancies them concealed from every eye. An agreeable companion, because he understands flattery; and all must be pleased with the first part of his conversation, though all are sure of its ending with a demand on their purse. While his youth countenances the levity of his conduct, he may thus earn a precarious subsistence: but when age comes on, the gravity of which is incompatible with buffoonery, then will he find himself forsaken by all; condemned in the decline of life to hang upon some rich family whom he once despised, there to undergo all the ingenuity of studied contempt, to be employed only as a spy upon the servants, or a bugbear to fright the children into obedience." Adieu.

LETTER LV

Beau Tibbs at Home

I am apt to fancy I have contracted a new acquaintance whom it will be no easy matter to shake off. My little beau yesterday overtook me again in one of the public walks, and slapping me on the shoulder, saluted me with an air of the most perfect familiarity. His dress was the same as usual, except that he had more powder in his hair, wore a dirtier

shirt, a pair of temple spectacles, and his hat under his arm.

As I knew him to be a harmless amusing little thing, I could not return his smiles with any degree of severity; so we walked forward on terms of the utmost intimacy, and in a few minutes discussed all the usual topics preliminary to particular conversation.

The oddities that marked his character, however, soon began to appear; he bowed to several well-dressed persons, who by their manner of returning the compliment, appeared perfect strangers. At intervals he drew out a pocket-book, seeming to take memorandums before all the company, with much importance and assiduity. In this manner he led me through the length of the whole walk, fretting at his absurdities, and fancying myself laughed at not less than him by every spectator.

When we were got to the end of our procession, "Blast me," cries he, with an air of vivacity, "I never saw the park so thin in my life before? there's no company at all to-day; not a single face to be seen." "No company!" interrupted I peevishly; "no company where there is such a crowd? why, man, there's too much. What are the thousands that have been laughing at us but company?" "Lord, my dear," returned he, with the utmost good humor, "you seem immensely chagrined: but blast me, when the world laughs at me, I laugh at the world, and so we are even. My Lord Trip, Bill Squash the Creolian, and I, sometimes make a party at being ridiculous; and so we say and do a thousand things for the joke's sake. But I see you are grave, and if you are for a fine grave sentimental companion, you shall dine with me and my wife to-day; I must insist on't: I'll introduce you to Mrs. Tibbs, a lady of as elegant qualifications as any in nature; she was bred, but that's between ourselves, under the inspection of the Countess of Allnight. A charming body of voice; but no more of that, she will give us a song. You shall see my little girl too, Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs, a sweet pretty creature! I design her for my Lord Drumstick's eldest son; but that's in friendship, let it go no farther; she's but six years old, and yet she walks a minuet, and plays on the guitar immensely already. I intend she shall be as perfect as possible in every accomplishment. In the first place, I'll make her a scholar: I'll teach her Greek myself, and learn that language purposely to instruct her; but let that be a secret."

Thus saying, without waiting for a reply,

he took me by the arm, and hauled me along. We passed through many dark alleys and winding ways; for, from some motives to me unknown, he seemed to have a particular aversion to every frequented street; at last, however, we got to the door of a dismal-looking house in the outlets of the town, where he informed me he chose to reside for the benefit of the air.

We entered the lower door, which ever seemed to lie most hospitably open; and I began to ascend an old and creaking staircase, when, as he mounted to show me the way, he demanded, whether I delighted in prospects; to which answering in the affirmative, "Then," says he, "I shall show you one of the most charming in the world, out of my window: we shall see the ships sailing, and the whole country for twenty miles round, tip-top, quite high. My Lord Swamp would give ten thousand guineas for such a one; but as I sometimes pleasantly tell him, I always love to keep my prospects at home, that my friends may visit me the oftener." By this time we were arrived as high as the stairs would permit us to ascend, till we came to what he was facetiously pleased to call the first floor down the chimney; and knocking at the door, a voice from within demanded, who's there? My conductor answered that it was him. But this not satisfying the querist, the voice again repeated the demand; to which he answered louder than before; and now the door was opened by an old woman with cautious reluctance.

When we were got in, he welcomed me to his house with great ceremony, and turning to the old woman, asked where was her lady? "Good troth," replied she in a peculiar dialect, "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because they have taken an oath against lending out the tub any longer." "My two shirts," cried he in a tone that faltered with confusion, "what does the idiot mean?" "I ken what I mean weel enough," replied the other: "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because—" "Fire and fury, no more of thy stupid explanations," cried he; "go and inform her we have got company. Were that Scotch hag to be for ever in my family, she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of her's, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding or high life; and yet it is very surprising too, as I had her from a parliament man, a friend of mine from the Highlands, one of the politest men in the world; but that's a secret."

We waited some time for Mrs. Tibbs's arrival, during which interval I had a full opportunity of surveying the chamber and all its furniture; which consisted of four chairs with old wrought bottoms, that he assured me were his wife's embroidery; a square table that had been once japanned; a cradle in one corner, a lumbering cabinet in the other; a broken shepherdess, and a mandarin without a head, were stuck over the chimney; and round the walls several paltry unframed pictures, which, he observed, were all his own drawing. "What do you think, Sir, of that head in the corner, done in the manner of Grisoni? there's the true keeping in it; it is my own face, and though there happens to be no likeness, a Countess offered me a hundred for its fellow; I refused her, for, hang it, that would be mechanical you know."

The wife at last made her appearance, at once a slattern and a coquette; much emaciated, but still carrying the remains of beauty. She made twenty apologies for being seen in such odious dishabille, but hoped to be excused, as she had stayed all night at the Gardens¹ with the Countess, who was excessively fond of the horns. "And, indeed, my dear," added she, turning to her husband, "his lordship drank your health in a bumper."—"Poor Jack," cries he, "a dear good-natured creature, I know he loves me. But I hope, my dear, you have given orders for dinner; you need make no great preparations neither, there are but three of us; something elegant, and little will do; a turbot, an ortolan, a—" "Or what do you think, my dear," interrupts the wife, "of a nice pretty bit of ox-cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce?"—"The very thing," replies he, "it will eat best with some smart bottled beer: but be sure to let us have the sauce his Grace was so fond of. I hate your immense loads of meat, that is country all over; extremely disgusting to those who are in the least acquainted with high life."

By this time my curiosity began to abate, and my appetite to increase: the company of fools may at first make us smile, but at last never fails of rendering us melancholy; I therefore pretended to recollect a prior engagement, and, after having shown my respect to the house, according to the fashion of the English, by giving the old servant a piece of money at the door, I took my leave; Mr. Tibbs assuring me, that dinner, if I stayed, would be ready at least in less than two hours.

LETTER LXXI

Beau Tibbs at Vauxhall

The people of London are as fond of walking as our friends at Pekin of riding, one of the principal entertainments of the citizens here in summer, is to repair about nightfall to a garden not far from town, where they walk about, show their best clothes and best faces, and listen to a concert provided for the occasion.

I accepted an invitation a few evenings ago from my old friend, the man in black, to be one of a party that was to sup there; and at the appointed hour waited upon him at his lodgings. There I found the company assembled, and expecting my arrival. Our party consisted of my friend in superlative finery, his stockings rolled, a black velvet waistcoat, which was formerly new, and his grey wig combed down in imitation of hair. A pawnbroker's widow, of whom, by the bye, my friend was a professed admirer, dressed out in green damask, with three gold rings on every finger. Mr. Tibbs, the second-rate beau I have formerly described, together with his lady in flimsy silk, dirty gauze instead of linen, and a hat as big as an umbrella.

Our first difficulty was in settling how we should set out. Mrs. Tibbs had a natural aversion to the water, and the widow being a little in flesh, as warmly protested against walking; a coach was therefore agreed upon; which being too small to carry five, Mr. Tibbs consented to sit in his wife's lap.

In this manner, therefore, we set forward, being entertained by the way with the bodings of Mr. Tibbs, who assured us he did not expect to see a single creature for the evening above the degree of a cheesemonger: that this was the last night of the Gardens, and that consequently we should be pestered with the nobility and gentry from Thames-street and Crooked-lane, with several other prophetic ejaculations, probably inspired by the uneasiness of his situation.

The illuminations began before we arrived, and I must confess, that upon entering the gardens I found every sense overpaid with more than expected pleasure; the lights every where glimmering through the scarcely moving trees, the full-bodied concert bursting on the stillness of the night, the natural concert of birds, in the more retired part of the grove, vying with that which was formed by art; the company gaily dressed, looking satisfaction, and the tables spread with various delicacies, all conspired to fill my imagination

¹ Vauxhall.

with the visionary happiness of the Arabian lawgiver, and lifted me into an ecstasy of admiration. "Head of Confucius," cried I to my friend, "this is fine! this unites rural beauty with courtly magnificence! if we except the virgins of immortality, that hang on every tree, and may be plucked at every desire, I do not see how this falls short of Mahomet's paradise!" "As for virgins," cries my friend, "it is true they are a fruit that do not much abound in our gardens here; but if ladies, as plenty as apples in autumn, and as complying as any houri of them all, can content you, I fancy we have no need to go to heaven for paradise."

I was going to second his remarks, when we were called to a consultation by Mr. Tibbs and the rest of the company, to know in what manner we were to lay out the evening to the greatest advantage. Mrs. Tibbs was for keeping the genteel walk of the garden, where, she observed, there was always the very best company; the widow, on the contrary, who came but once a season, was for securing a good standing place to see the water-works, which she assured us would begin in less than an hour at farthest; a dispute therefore began, and as it was managed between two of very opposite characters, it threatened to grow more bitter at every reply. Mrs. Tibbs wondered how people could pretend to know the polite world, who had received all their rudiments of breeding behind a counter; to which the other replied, that though some people sat behind counters, yet they could sit at the head of their own tables too, and carve three good dishes of hot meat whenever they thought proper; which was more than some people could say for themselves, that hardly knew a rabbit and onions from a green goose and gooseberries.

It is hard to say where this might have ended, had not the husband, who probably knew the impetuosity of his wife's disposition, proposed to end the dispute, by adjourning to a box, and try if there was any thing to be had for supper that was supportable. To this we all consented; but here a new distress arose: Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs would sit in none but a genteel box, a box where they might see and be seen, one, as they expressed it, in the very focus of public view; but such a box was not easy to be obtained, for though we were perfectly convinced of our own gentility, and the gentility of our appearance, yet we found it a difficult matter to persuade the keepers of the boxes to be of our opinion; they chose to reserve genteel

boxes for what they judged more genteel company.

At last, however, we were fixed, though somewhat obscurely, and supplied with the usual entertainment of the place. The widow found the supper excellent, but Mrs. Tibbs thought every thing detestable. "Come, come, my dear," cries the husband, by way of consolation, "to be sure we can't find such dressing here as we have at Lord Crump's or Lady Crimp's; but for Vauxhall dressing it is pretty good: it is not their victuals indeed I find fault with, but their wine; their wine," cries he, drinking off a glass, "indeed, is most abominable."

By this last contradiction, the widow was fairly conquered in point of politeness. She perceived now that she had no pretensions in the world to taste; her very senses were vulgar, since she had praised detestable custard, and smacked at wretched wine; she was therefore content to yield the victory, and for the rest of the night to listen and improve. It is true, she would now and then forget herself, and confess she was pleased, but they soon brought her back again to miserable refinement. She once praised the painting of the box in which we were sitting, but was soon convinced that such paltry pieces ought rather to excite horror than satisfaction; she ventured again to commend one of the singers, but Mrs. Tibbs soon let her know, in the style of a connoisseur, that the singer in question had neither ear, voice, nor judgment.

Mr. Tibbs, now willing to prove that his wife's pretensions to music were just, entreated her to favor the company with a song; but to this she gave a positive denial — "for you know very well, my dear," says she, "that I am not in voice to-day, and when one's voice is not equal to one's judgment, what signifies singing; besides, as there is no accompaniment it would be but spoiling music." All these excuses, however, were overruled by the rest of the company, who, though one would think they already had music enough, joined in the entreaty. But particularly the widow, now willing to convince the company of her breeding, pressed so warmly, that she seemed determined to take no refusal. At last then the lady complied, and after humming for some minutes, began with such a voice, and such affectation, as I could perceive, gave but little satisfaction to any except her husband. He sat with rapture in his eye, and beat time with his hand on the table.

You must observe, my friend, that it is the

custom of this country, when a lady or gentleman happens to sing, for the company to sit as mute and motionless as statues. Every feature, every limb, must seem to correspond in fixed attention; and while the song continues, they are to remain in a state of universal petrification. In this mortifying situation we had continued for some time, listening, and looking with tranquillity, when the master of the box came to inform us, that the water-works were just going to begin. At this information I could instantly perceive the widow bounce from her seat; but correcting herself, she sat down again, repressed by motives of good breeding. Mrs. Tibbs, who had seen the water-works a hundred times, resolving not to be interrupted, continued her song without any share of mercy, nor had the smallest pity on our impatience. The widow's face, I own, gave me high entertainment; in it I could plainly read the struggle she felt between good breeding and curiosity: she talked of the water-works the whole evening before, and seemed to have come merely in order to see them; but then she could not bounce out in the very middle of a song, for that would be forfeiting all pretensions to high life, or high-lived company, ever after. Mrs. Tibbs therefore kept on singing, and we continued to listen, till at last, when the song was just concluded, the waiter came to inform us that the water-works were over.

"The water-works over!" cried the widow; "the water-works over already! that's impossible! they can't be over so soon!" — "It is not my business," replied the fellow, "to contradict your ladyship; I'll run again and see." He went, and soon returned with a confirmation of the dismal tidings. No ceremony could now bind my friend's disappointed mistress, she testified her displeasure in the openest manner; in short, she now began to find fault in turn, and at last insisted upon going home, just at the time that Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs assured the company, that the polite hours were going to begin, and that the ladies would instantaneously be entertained with the horns. Adieu.

LETTER LXXVII

The London Shop-Keeper

The shops of London are as well furnished as those of Pekin. Those of London have a picture hung at their door; informing the passers what they have to sell, as those at Pekin have a board to assure the buyer that they have no intention to cheat him.

I was this morning to buy silk for a night-cap; immediately upon entering the mercer's shop, the master and his two men, with wigs plastered with powder, appeared to ask my commands. They were certainly the civilest people alive; if I but looked, they flew to the place where I cast my eye; every motion of mine sent them running round the whole shop for my satisfaction. I informed them that I wanted what was good, and they showed me not less than forty pieces, and each was better than the former, the prettiest pattern in nature, and the fittest in the world for nightcaps. "My very good friend," said I to the mercer, "you must not pretend to instruct me in silks; I know these in particular to be no better than your mere flimsy Bungees." — "That may be," cried the mercer, who I afterwards found had never contradicted a man in his life; "I cannot pretend to say but they may; but I can assure you, my lady Trail has had a sack from this piece this very morning." — "But friend," said I, "though my lady has chosen a sack from it, I see no necessity that I should wear it for a nightcap." — "That may be," returned he again, "yet what becomes a pretty lady, will at any time look well on a handsome gentleman." This short compliment was thrown in so very seasonably upon my ugly face, that even though I disliked the silk, I desired him to cut me off the pattern of a night-cap.

While this business was consigned to his journeymen, the master himself took down some pieces of silk still finer than any I had yet seen, and spreading them before me, "There," cries he, "there's beauty; My Lord Snakeskin has bespoke the fellow to this for the birth-night this very morning; it would look charmingly in waistcoats." — "But I don't want a waistcoat," replied I. — "Not want a waistcoat!" returned the mercer, "then I would advise you to buy one; when waistcoats are wanted, you may depend upon it they will come dear. Always buy before you want, and you are sure to be well used, as they say in Cheapside." There was so much justice in his advice, that I could not refuse taking it; besides, the silk, which was a really good one, increased the temptation; so I gave orders for that too.

As I was waiting to have my bargains measured and cut, which, I know not how, they executed but slowly, during the interval the mercer entertained me with the modern manner of some of the nobility receiving company in their morning gowns; "Perhaps,

Sir," adds he, "you have a mind to see what kind of silk is universally worn." Without waiting for my reply, he spreads a piece before me, which might be reckoned beautiful even in China. "If the nobility," continues he, "were to know I sold this to any under a Right Honorable, I should certainly lose their custom; you see, my Lord, it is at once rich, tasty, and quite the thing." — "I am no Lord," interrupted I. — "I beg pardon," cried he; "but be pleased to remember, when you intend buying a morning gown, that you had an offer from me of something worth money. Conscience, Sir, conscience is my way of dealing; you may buy a morning gown now, or you may stay till they become dearer and less fashionable; but it is not my business to advise." In short, most reverend Fum, he persuaded me to buy a morning gown also, and would probably have persuaded me

to have bought half the goods in his shop, if I had stayed long enough, or was furnished with sufficient money.

Upon returning home, I could not help reflecting with some astonishment, how this very man, with such a confined education and capacity, was yet capable of turning me as he thought proper, and moulding me to his inclinations! I knew he was only answering his own purposes, even while he attempted to appear solicitous about mine; yet, by a voluntary infatuation, a sort of passion, compounded of vanity and good-nature, I walked into the snare with my eyes open, and put myself to future pain in order to give him immediate pleasure. The wisdom of the ignorant somewhat resembles the instinct of animals; it is diffused in but a very narrow sphere, but within that circle it acts with vigor, uniformity, and success. Adieu.

EDMUND BURKE (1729-1797)

Edmund Burke was born in Dublin, Jan. 12, 1729, and was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated bachelor of arts at the age of nineteen. In 1750 he went to London as a law-student at the Middle Temple; and his whole life was henceforth lived in England. For a whole generation he was the dominant figure in English politics, and the associate of the most distinguished men of letters of his day. In 1756 he established himself as an author by his *Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful*. He was a member of The Club, the literary circle presided over by Dr. Johnson. In 1766 he was elected to Parliament, and at once declared himself a friend of the American colonies. In 1771 he became agent at London for the Assembly of the Colony of New York; and in 1775 he delivered his great speech *On Conciliation with America*. From 1788 to 1794 he conducted on behalf of the House of Commons the protracted trial before the House of Lords of Warren Hastings, impeached at Burke's instance of high crimes and misdemeanors in his administration of affairs in India.

Throughout his public life, Burke was the ardent champion of constitutional liberty, urging the rights of the American colonists, of the Roman Catholics in Ireland, of the oppressed masses of India, bringing to all these causes the clear power of his intellect and the vivid poetry of his imagination. He was one of the early adherents to the movement for the abolition of negro slavery. But in the French Revolution Burke saw not the cause of liberty, but an attack on the settled institutions of society, which in his belief were the only basis and guarantee of human liberty. He loved "liberty only in the guise of order." The tyranny of the Paris mob was to him more hateful than the tyranny which it had overthrown. He became the outspoken champion of the oppressed aristocracy and the shamefully entreated royal family of France, and still more of the established order of Christian civilization which the Revolution was seeking to destroy.

English radicals had hailed the Revolution with delight; and on November 4, 1789, an English clergyman had delivered before the Society for Commemorating the Revolution (of 1688) in Great Britain an address extolling the Revolution in France. This was the immediate occasion of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in the form of a letter addressed to "a gentleman of Paris," published in 1790. Though written as a letter, its manner is that of splendid and impassioned oratory. There are few pages of English prose written with such magnificent rhetoric and such intensity of emotion as the famous passage from the *Reflections* printed below. Burke declared that when he wrote it the paper was wetted with his tears.

An excellent brief biography of Burke is that of John Morley in the English Men of Letters series. The *Reflections on the Revolution in France* is reprinted in Everyman's Library. A good volume of selections from Burke is that of L. N. Broughton in the Modern Student's Library (Scribner).

REFLECTIONS ON THE
REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

(1790)

THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER 6, 1789

In France you are now in the crisis of a revolution, and in the transit from one form of government to another — you cannot see that character of men exactly in the same situation in which we see it in this country. With us it is militant; with you it is triumphant; and you know how it can act when its power is commensurate to its will. I would not be supposed to confine those observations to any description of men, or to comprehend all men of any description within them — No! far from it. I am as incapable of that injustice, as I am of keeping terms with those who profess principles of extremities; and who, under the name of religion, teach little else than wild and dangerous politics. The worst of these politics of revolution is this: they temper and harden the breast, in order to prepare it for the desperate strokes which are sometimes used in extreme occasions. But as these occasions may never arrive, the mind receives a gratuitous taint; and the moral sentiments suffer not a little, when no political purpose is served by the deprivation. This sort of people are so taken up with their theories about the rights of man, that they have totally forgotten his nature. Without opening one new avenue to the understanding, they have succeeded in stopping up those that lead to the heart. They have perverted in themselves, and in those that attend to them, all the well-placed sympathies of the human breast.

This famous sermon¹ of the Old Jewry breathes nothing but this spirit through all the political part. Plots, massacres, assassinations, seem to some people a trivial price for obtaining a revolution. A cheap, bloodless reformation, a guiltless liberty, appear flat and vapid in their taste. There must be a great change of scene; there must be a magnificent stage effect; there must be a grand spectacle to rouse the imagination, grown torpid with the lazy enjoyment of sixty years' security, and the still unanimating repose of public prosperity. The preacher found them all in the French Revolution. This inspires a juvenile warmth through his

whole frame. His enthusiasm kindles as he advances; and when he arrives at his peroration it is in a full blaze. Then viewing, from the Pisgah² of his pulpit, the free, moral, happy, flourishing, and glorious state of France, as in a bird's-eye landscape of a promised land, he breaks out into the following rapture:

"What an eventful period is this! I am thankful that I have lived to it; I could almost say, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. — I have lived to see a diffusion of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error. — I have lived to see the rights of men better understood than ever; and nations panting for liberty which seemed to have lost the idea of it. — I have lived to see thirty millions of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice. Their king led in triumph and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects."² . . .

I find a preacher of the gospel profaning the beautiful and prophetic ejaculation, commonly called "*nunc dimittis*,"³ made on the first presentation of our Saviour in the temple, and applying it, with an inhuman and unnatural rapture, to the most horrid, atrocious, and afflicting spectacle that perhaps ever was exhibited to the pity and indignation of mankind. This "*leading in triumph*," a thing in its best form unmanly and irreligious, which fills our preacher with such unhallowed transports, must shock, I believe, the moral taste of every well-born mind. Several English were the stupefied and indignant spectators of that triumph. It was (unless we have been strangely deceived) a spectacle more resembling a procession of American savages, entering into Onondaga, after some of their murders called victories, and leading into hovels hung round with scalps, their captives, overpowered with the scoffs and buffets of women as ferocious as themselves, much more than it resembled the triumphal pomp of a civilized, martial nation; — if a civilized nation, or any men

¹ The mountain from which Moses viewed the promised land of Canaan.

² Another of these reverend gentlemen, who was witness to some of the spectacles which Paris has lately exhibited, expresses himself thus: — "*A king dragged in submissive triumph by his conquering subjects*, is one of those appearances of grandeur which seldom rise in the prospect of human affairs, and which, during the remainder of my life, I shall think of with wonder and gratification." These gentlemen agree marvellously in their feelings. (Burke's note.)

³ The first words of the Vulgate version of Luke II, 29: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."

¹ An address by Dr. Richard Price, delivered before the Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain, at a meeting held in the street called Old Jewry.

who had a sense of generosity, were capable of a personal triumph over the fallen and afflicted.

This, my dear Sir, was not the triumph of France. I must believe that, as a nation, it overwhelmed you with shame and horror. I must believe that the National Assembly find themselves in a state of the greatest humiliation in not being able to punish the authors of this triumph, or the actors in it; and that they are in a situation in which any inquiry they may make upon the subject must be destitute even of the appearance of liberty or impartiality. The apology of that assembly is found in their situation; but when we approve what they *must* bear, it is in us the degenerate choice of a vitiated mind.

With a compelled appearance of deliberation, they vote under the dominion of a stern necessity. They sit in the heart, as it were, of a foreign republic: they have their residence in a city whose constitution has emanated neither from the charter of their king, nor from their legislative power. They are surrounded by an army not raised either by the authority of their crown, or by their command: and which, if they should order to dissolve itself, would instantly dissolve them. There they sit, after a gang of assassins had driven away some hundreds of the members; whilst those who held the same moderate principles, with more patience or better hope, continued every day exposed to outrageous insults and murderous threats. There a majority, sometimes real, sometimes pretended, captive itself, compels a captive king to issue as royal edicts, at third hand, the polluted nonsense of their most licentious and giddy coffee-houses. It is notorious, that all their measures are decided before they are debated. It is beyond doubt, that under the terror of the bayonet, and the lamp-post, and the torch to their houses, they are obliged to adopt all the crude and desperate measures suggested by clubs composed of a monstrous medley of all conditions, tongues, and nations. Among these are found persons, in comparison of whom Catiline would be thought scrupulous, and Cethegus¹ a man of sobriety and moderation. Nor is it in these clubs alone that the public measures are deformed into monsters. They undergo a previous distortion in academies, intended as so many seminaries for these clubs, which are set up in all the places of public resort. In these meetings of all sorts, every counsel, in

proportion as it is daring, and violent, and perfidious, is taken for the mark of superior genius. Humanity and compassion are ridiculed as the fruits of superstition and ignorance. Tenderness to individuals is considered as treason to the public. Liberty is always to be estimated perfect as property is rendered insecure. Amidst assassination, massacre, and confiscation, perpetrated or meditated, they are forming plans for the good order of future society. Embracing in their arms the carcasses of base criminals, and promoting their relations on the title of their offenses, they drive hundreds of virtuous persons to the same end, by forcing them to subsist by beggary or by crime.

The assembly, their organ, acts before them the farce of deliberation with as little decency as liberty. They act like the comedians of a fair before a riotous audience; they act amidst the tumultuous cries of a mixed mob of ferocious men, and of women lost to shame, who, according to their insolent fancies, direct, control, applaud, explode² them; and sometimes mix and take their seats amongst them; domineering over them with a strange mixture of servile petulance and proud, presumptuous authority. As they have inverted order in all things, the gallery is in the place of the house. This assembly, which overthrows kings and kingdoms, has not even the physiognomy and aspect of a grave legislative body — *nec color imperii, nec frons ulla senatus*.² They have a power given to them, like that of the evil principle, to subvert and destroy; but none to construct, except such machines as may be fitted for further subversion and further destruction.

Who is it that admires, and from the heart is attached to, national representative assemblies, but must turn with horror and disgust from such a profane burlesque, and abominable perversion of that sacred institute? Lovers of monarchy, lovers of republics, must alike abhor it. The members of your assembly must themselves groan under the tyranny of which they have all the shame, none of the direction, and little of the profit. I am sure many of the members who compose even the majority of that body must feel as I do, notwithstanding the applauses of the Revolution Society. Miserable king! miserable assembly! How must that assembly be silently scandalized with those of their members, who could call a day which

¹ hiss from the stage.

² An associate of Catiline in his conspiracy against the Roman republic.

² "neither the outward show of an empire, nor any feature of a Senate" — a phrase from Lucan's *Pharsalia*, IX, 207.

seemed to blot the sun out of the heavens, "*unbeau jour!*"¹ How must they be inwardly indignant at hearing others, who thought fit to declare to them, "that the vessel of the state would fly forward in her course towards regeneration with more speed than ever," from the stiff gale of treason and murder, which preceded our preacher's triumph! What must they have felt, whilst, with outward patience, and inward indignation, they heard of the slaughter of innocent gentlemen in their houses, that "the blood spilled was not the most pure!" What must they have felt, when they were besieged by complaints of disorder which shook their country to its foundations, at being compelled coolly to tell the complainants, that they were under the protection of the law, and that they would address the king (the captive king) to cause the laws to be enforced for their protection; when the enslaved ministers of that captive king had formally notified to them, that there was neither law, nor authority, nor power left to protect! What must they have felt at being obliged, as a felicitation on the present new year, to request their captive king to forget the stormy period of the last, on account of the great good which *he* was likely to produce to his people; to the complete attainment of which good they adjourned the practical demonstrations of their loyalty, assuring him of their obedience, when he should no longer possess any authority to command!

This address was made with much good nature and affection, to be sure. But among the revolutions in France must be reckoned a considerable revolution in their ideas of politeness. In England we are said to learn manners at second-hand from your side of the water, and that we dress our behavior in the frippery of France. If so, we are still in the old cut; and have not so far conformed to the new Parisian mode of good breeding, as to think it quite in the most refined strain of delicate compliment (whether in condolence or congratulation) to say, to the most humiliated creature that crawls upon the earth, that great public benefits are derived from the murder of his servants, the attempted assassination of himself and of his wife, and the mortification, disgrace, and degradation, that he has personally suffered. It is a topic of consolation which our ordinary² of Newgate would be too humane to use to a criminal at the foot of the gallows.

I should have thought that the hangman of Paris, now that he is liberalized by the vote of the National Assembly, and is allowed his rank and arms in the herald's college of the rights of men, would be too generous, too gallant a man, too full of the sense of his new dignity, to employ that cutting consolation to any of the persons whom the *leve nation*¹ might bring under the administration of his *executive power*.

A man is fallen indeed, when he is thus flattered. The anodyne draught of oblivion, thus drugged, is well calculated to preserve a galling wakefulness, and to feed the living ulcer of a corroding memory. Thus to administer the opiate potion of amnesty, powdered with all the ingredients of scorn and contempt, is to hold to his lips, instead of "the balm of hurt minds," the cup of human misery full to the brim, and to force him to drink it to the dregs.

Yielding to reasons, at least as forcible as those which were so delicately urged in the compliment on the new year, the king of France will probably endeavor to forget these events and that compliment. But history, who keeps a durable record of all our acts, and exercises her awful censure over the proceedings of all sorts of sovereigns, will not forget either those events, or the era of this liberal refinement in the intercourse of mankind. History will record, that on the morning of the 6th of October, 1789, the king and queen of France, after a day of confusion, alarm, dismay, and slaughter, lay down, under the pledged security of public faith, to indulge nature in a few hours of respite, and troubled, melancholy repose. From this sleep the queen was first startled by the voice of the sentinel at her door, who cried out to her to save herself by flight — that this was the last proof of fidelity he could give — that they were upon him, and he was dead. Instantly he was cut down. A band of cruel ruffians and assassins, reeking with his blood, rushed into the chamber of the queen, and pierced with a hundred strokes of bayonets and poniards the bed, from whence this persecuted woman had but just time to fly almost naked, and, through ways unknown to the murderers, had escaped to seek refuge at the feet of a king and husband, not secure of his own life for a moment.

This king, to say no more of him, and this queen, and their infant children, (who once would have been the pride and hope of a great and generous people,) were then forced

¹ 6th of October, 1789. (Burke's note).

² clergyman attached to the prison.

¹ treason against the nation.

to abandon the sanctuary of the most splendid palace¹ in the world, which they left swimming in blood, polluted by massacre, and strewn with scattered limbs and mutilated carcasses. Thence they were conducted into the capital of their kingdom. Two had been selected from the unprovoked, unresisted, promiscuous slaughter, which was made of the gentlemen of birth and family who composed the king's body guard. These two gentlemen, with all the parade of an execution of justice, were cruelly and publicly dragged to the block, and beheaded in the great court of the palace. Their heads were stuck upon spears, and led the procession; whilst the royal captives who followed in the train were slowly moved along, amidst the horrid yells, and shrilling screams, and frantic dances, and infamous contumelies, and all the unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abused shape of the vilest of women. After they had been made to taste, drop by drop, more than the bitterness of death, in the slow torture of a journey of twelve miles, protracted to six hours, they were, under a guard, composed of those very soldiers who had thus conducted them through this famous triumph, lodged in one of the old palaces of Paris now converted into a bastille for kings.

Is this a triumph to be consecrated at altars? to be commemorated with grateful thanksgiving? to be offered to the divine humanity with fervent prayer and enthusiastic ejaculation? — These Theban and Thracian orgies, acted in France, and applauded only in the Old Jewry, I assure you, kindle prophetic enthusiasm in the minds but of very few people in this kingdom: although a saint and apostle, who may have revelations of his own, and who has so completely vanquished all the mean superstitions of the heart, may incline to think it pious and decorous to compare it with the entrance into the world of the Prince of Peace, proclaimed in a holy temple by a venerable sage, and not long before not worse announced by the voice of angels to the quiet innocence of shepherds.

At first I was at a loss to account for this fit of unguarded transport. I knew, indeed, that the sufferings of monarchs make a delicious repast to some sort of palates. There were reflections which might serve to keep this appetite within some bounds of temperance. But when I took one circumstance into my consideration, I was obliged to

confess, that much allowance ought to be made for the society, and that the temptation was too strong for common discretion; I mean, the circumstance of the *Io Pæan* of the triumph, the animating cry which called "for all the BISHOPS to be hanged on the lamp-posts,"¹ might well have brought forth a burst of enthusiasm on the foreseen consequences of this happy day. I allow to so much enthusiasm some little deviation from prudence. I allow this prophet to break forth into hymns of joy and thanksgiving on an event which appears like the precursor of the Millennium, and the projected fifth monarchy, in the destruction of all church establishments. There was, however, (as in all human affairs there is,) in the midst of this joy, something to exercise the patience of these worthy gentlemen, and to try the long-suffering of their faith. The actual murder of the king and queen, and their child, was wanting to the other auspicious circumstances of this "*beautiful day*." The actual murder of the bishops, though called for by so many holy ejaculations, was also wanting. A group of regicide and sacrilegious slaughter, was indeed boldly sketched, but it was only sketched. It unhappily was left unfinished, in this great history-piece of the massacre of innocents. What hardy pencil of a great master, from the school of the rights of men, will finish it, is to be seen hereafter. The age has not yet the complete benefit of that diffusion of knowledge that has undermined superstition and error; and the king of France wants another object or two to consign to oblivion, in consideration of all the good which is to arise from his own sufferings, and the patriotic crimes of an enlightened age.

Although this work of our new light and knowledge did not go to the length that in all probability it was intended it should be carried, yet I must think that such treatment of any human creatures must be shocking to any but those who are made for accomplishing revolutions. But I cannot stop here. Influenced by the inborn feelings of my nature, and not being illuminated by a single ray of this new-sprung modern light, I confess to you, Sir, that the exalted rank of the persons suffering, and particularly the sex, the beauty, and the amiable qualities of the descendant of so many kings and emperors, with the tender age of royal infants, insensible only through infancy and innocence of the cruel outrages to which their parents were exposed, instead of being a subject of

¹ The Tuileries.

¹ Tous les Evêques à la lanterne. (Burke's note.)

exultation, adds not a little to my sensibility on that most melancholy occasion.

I hear that the august person,¹ who was the principal object of our preacher's triumph, though he supported himself, felt much on that shameful occasion. As a man, it became him to feel for his wife and his children, and the faithful guards of his person, that were massacred in cold blood about him; as a prince, it became him to feel for the strange and frightful transformation of his civilized subjects, and to be more grieved for them than solicitous for himself. It derogates little from his fortitude, while it adds infinitely to the honor of his humanity. I am very sorry to say it, very sorry indeed, that such personages are in a situation in which it is not becoming in us to praise the virtues of the great.

I hear, and I rejoice to hear, that the great lady,² the other object of the triumph, has borne that day, (one is interested that beings made for suffering should suffer well,) and that she bears all the succeeding days, that she bears the imprisonment of her husband, and her captivity, and the exile of her friends, and the insulting adulation of addresses, and the whole weight of her accumulated wrongs, with a serene patience, in a manner suited to her rank and race, and becoming the offspring of a sovereign³ distinguished for her piety and her courage; that, like her, she has lofty sentiments; that she feels with the dignity of a Roman matron; that in the last extremity she will save herself from the last disgrace; and that, if she must fall, she will fall by no ignoble hand.⁴

It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France, then the dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in, — glittering like the morning-star, full of life, and splendor, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what a heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in

a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honor, and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defense of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

This mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the ancient chivalry; and the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influenced through a long succession of generations, even to the time we live in. If it should ever be totally extinguished, the loss I fear will be great. It is this which has given its character to modern Europe. It is this which has distinguished it under all its forms of government, and distinguished it to its advantage, from the states of Asia, and possibly from those states which flourished in the most brilliant periods of the antique world. It was this, which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all the gradations of social life. It was this opinion which mitigated kings into companions, and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force or opposition, it subdued the fierceness of pride and power; it obliged sovereigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a dominating vanquisher of laws to be subdued by manners.

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off.

¹ Louis XVI.

² Marie Antoinette.

³ Maria Theresa.

⁴ Marie Antoinette carried poison on her person.

All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

On this scheme of things, a king is but a man, a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal, and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such, and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege, are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying its simplicity. The murder of a king, or a queen, or a bishop, or a father, are only common homicide; and if the people are by any chance, or in any way, gainers by it, a sort of homicide much the most pardonable, and into which we ought not to make too severe a scrutiny.

On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanic philosophy, our institutions can never be embodied, if I may use the expression, in persons; so as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable of filling their place. These public affections, combined with manners, are required sometimes as supplements, sometimes as correctives, always as aids to law. The precept given by a wise man, as well as a great critic, for the construction of poems, is equally true as to states: *Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia suntu.*¹ There ought to be a system of manners in every nation, which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely.

But power, of some kind or other, will survive the shock in which manners and opin-

ions perish; and it will find other and worse means for its support. The usurpation which, in order to subvert ancient institutions, has destroyed ancient principles, will hold power by arts similar to those by which it has acquired it. When the old feudal and chivalrous spirit of *fealty*, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and subjects from the precautions of tyranny, shall be extinct in the minds of men, plots and assassinations will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiscation, and that long roll of grim and bloody maxims, which form the political code of all power, not standing on its own honor, and the honor of those who are to obey it. Kings will be tyrants from policy, when subjects are rebels from principle.

When ancient opinions and rules of life are taken away, the loss cannot possibly be estimated. From that moment we have no compass to govern us; nor can we know distinctly to what port we steer. Europe, undoubtedly, taken in a mass, was in a flourishing condition the day on which your revolution was completed. How much of that prosperous state was owing to the spirit of our old manners and opinions is not easy to say; but as such causes cannot be indifferent in their operation, we must presume, that, on the whole, their operation was beneficial.

We are but too apt to consider things in the state in which we find them, without sufficiently adverting to the causes by which they have been produced, and possibly may be upheld. Nothing is more certain, than that our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles; and were indeed the result of both combined; I mean the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion. The nobility and the clergy, the one by profession, the other by patronage, kept learning in existence, even in the midst of arms and confusions, and whilst governments were rather in their causes, than formed. Learning paid back what it received to nobility and to priesthood; and paid it with usury, by enlarging their ideas, and by furnishing their minds. Happy if they had all continued to know their indissoluble union, and their proper place! Happy if learning, not debauched by ambition, had been satisfied to continue the instructor, and not aspired to be the master! Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast

¹ "It is not enough that poems be beautiful; they must also be pleasing." — Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 99.

into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.

If, as I suspect, modern letters owe more than they are always willing to own to ancient manners, so do other interests which we value full as much as they are worth. Even commerce, and trade, and manufacture, the gods of our economical politicians, are themselves perhaps but creatures; are themselves but effects, which, as first causes, we choose to worship. They certainly grew under the same shade in which learning flourished. They too may decay with their natural protecting principles. With you, for the present at least, they all threaten to disappear together. Where trade and manufactures are wanting to a people, and the spirit of nobility and religion remains, sentiment supplies, and not always ill supplies, their place; but if commerce and the arts should be lost in an experiment to try how well a state may stand without these old fundamental principles, what sort of a thing must be a nation of gross, stupid, ferocious, and, at the same time, poor and sordid, barbarians, destitute of religion, honor, or manly pride, possessing nothing at present, and hoping for nothing hereafter?

I wish you may not be going fast, and by the shortest cut, to that horrible and disgusting situation. Already there appears a poverty of conception, a coarseness and vulgarity, in all the proceedings of the Assembly and of all their instructors. Their liberty is not liberal. Their science is presumptuous ignorance. Their humanity is savage and brutal.

THE IMPEACHMENT OF WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.

Warren Hastings (1732-1818) was the first British Governor-General of India (1773-85). In 1786 he was impeached by the House of Commons on charges of maladministration and corruption. Burke, who had been instrumental in securing the impeachment, was made principal manager on behalf of the Commons of the trial of Hastings before the tribunal of the House of Lords. The trial, begun in 1788, dragged on for seven years, and ended in 1795 with the acquittal of the defendant, an acquittal which, with some reservations, the verdict of history has confirmed. The charges of personal corruption were certainly without foundation. The charges of wanton cruelty to the native population of India did not sufficiently take into account the difficulty of the problems which confronted the British rulers. The

public outcry against Warren Hastings, and the passionate indignation which informs Burke's denunciation of him, are symptoms of the newly awakened social conscience and the humanitarian zeal against oppression which mark the later decades of the eighteenth century.

THE CHARGE

February 19, 1788

I, therefore, charge Mr. Hastings with having destroyed, for private purposes, the whole system of government by the six provincial councils, which he had no right to destroy.

I charge him with having delegated to others that power which the act of parliament had directed him to preserve unalienably in himself.

I charge him with having formed a committee to be mere instruments and tools, at the enormous expenses of £62,000 per annum.

I charge him with having appointed a person their *dewan*,¹ to whom these Englishmen were to be subservient tools; whose name, to his own knowledge, was by the general voice of India, by the general recorded voice of the Company,² by recorded official transactions, by everything that can make a man known, abhorred and detested, stamped with infamy; and with giving him the whole power which he had thus separated from the council-general and from the provincial councils.

I charge him with taking bribes of Gunga Govin Sing.

I charge him with not having done that bribe service which fidelity even in iniquity requires at the hands of the worst of men.

I charge him with having robbed those people of whom he took the bribes.

I charge him with having fraudulently alienated the fortunes of widows.

I charge him with having, without right, title, or purchase, taken the lands of orphans, and given them to wicked persons under him.

I charge him with having removed the natural guardians of a minor Rajah, and with having given that trust to a stranger, Debi Sing, whose wickedness was known to himself, and all the world; and by whom the Rajah, his family and dependants were cruelly oppressed.

I charge him with having committed to the management of Debi Sing three great provinces; and thereby, with having wasted

¹ financial agent.

² The East-India Company.

the country, ruined the landed interest, cruelly harassed the peasants, burnt their houses, seized their crops, tortured and degraded their persons, and destroyed the honor of the whole female race of that country.

In the name of the Commons of England, I charge all this villany upon Warren Hastings, in this last moment of my application to you.

My lords, what is it that we want here to a great act of national justice? Do we want a cause, my lords? You have the cause of oppressed princes, of undone women of the first rank, of desolated provinces, and of wasted kingdoms.

Do you want a criminal, my lords? When was there so much iniquity ever laid to the charge of any one?—No, my lords, you must not look to punish any other such delinquent from India.—Warren Hastings has not left substance enough in India to nourish such another delinquent.

My lords, is it a prosecutor you want?—You have before you the Commons of Great Britain as prosecutors; and, I believe, my lords, that the sun in his beneficent progress round the world does not behold a more glorious sight than that of men, separated from a remote people by the material bounds and barriers of nature, united by the bond of a social and moral community;—all the Commons of England resenting, as their own, the indignities and cruelties that are offered to all the people of India.

Do we want a tribunal? My lords, no example of antiquity, nothing in the modern world, nothing in the range of human imagination, can supply us with a tribunal like this. My lords, here we see virtually in the mind's eye that sacred majesty of the Crown, under whose authority you sit, and whose power you exercise. We see in that invisible authority, what we all feel in reality and life, the beneficent powers and protecting justice of his Majesty. We have here the heir-apparent to the Crown, such as the fond wishes of the people of England wish an heir-apparent of the Crown to be. We have here all the branches of the royal family in a situation between majesty and subjection, between the sovereign and the subject,—offering a pledge in that situation for the support of the rights of the Crown and the liberties of the people, both which extremities they touch. My lords, we have a great hereditary peerage here; those who have their own honor, the honor of their ancestors,

and of their posterity, to guard; and who will justify, as they have always justified, that provision in the constitution by which justice is made an hereditary office. My lords, we have here a new nobility, who have risen and exalted themselves by various merits, by great military services, which have extended the fame of this country from the rising to the setting sun: we have those who by various civil merits and various civil talents have been exalted to a situation which they well deserve, and in which they will justify the favor of their sovereign, and the good opinion of their fellow-subjects, and make them rejoice to see those virtuous characters, that were the other day upon a level with them, now exalted above them in rank, but feeling with them in sympathy what they felt in common with them before. We have persons exalted from the practice of the law, from the place in which they administered high though subordinate justice, to a seat here, to enlighten with their knowledge and to strengthen with their votes those principles which have distinguished the courts in which they have presided.

My lords, you have here also the lights of our religion; you have the bishops of England. My lords, you have that true image of the primitive church in its ancient form, in its ancient ordinances, purified from the superstitions and the vices which a long succession of ages will bring upon the best institutions. You have the representatives of that religion which says that their God is love, that the very vital spirit of their institution is charity; a religion which so much hates oppression, that when the God whom we adore appeared in human form, he did not appear in a form of greatness and majesty, but in sympathy with the lowest of the people,—and thereby made it a firm and ruling principle, that their welfare was the object of all government; since the person, who was the Master of Nature, chose to appear himself in a subordinate situation. These are the considerations which influence them, which animate them, and will animate them, against all oppression; knowing, that He who is called first among them, and first among us all, both of the flock that is fed and of those who feed it, made Himself "the servant of all."

My lords, these are the securities which we have in all the constituent parts of the body of this House. We know them, we reckon, we rest upon them, and commit safely the interests of India and of humanity

into your hands. Therefore, it is with confidence that, ordered by the Commons,

I impeach Warren Hastings, Esq., of high crimes and misdemeanors.

I impeach him in the name of the Commons of Great Britain in parliament assembled, whose parliamentary trust he has betrayed.

I impeach him in the name of all the Commons of Great Britain, whose national character he has dishonored.

I impeach him in the name of the people in India, whose laws, rights, and liberties he has subverted, whose properties he has destroyed, whose country he has laid waste and desolate.

I impeach him in the name and by virtue of those eternal laws of justice which he has violated.

I impeach him in the name of human nature itself, which he has cruelly outraged, injured, and oppressed in both sexes, in every age, rank, situation, and condition of life.

PERORATION

June 16, 1794

My lords, I have done; the part of the Commons is concluded. With a trembling solicitude we consign this product of our long, long labors to your charge. Take it! — take it! It is a sacred trust. Never before was a cause of such magnitude submitted to any human tribunal.

My lords, at this awful close, in the name of the Commons, and surrounded by them, I attest the retiring, I attest the advancing generations, between which, as a link in the great chain of eternal order, we stand. — We call this nation, we call the world to witness, that the Commons have shrunk from no labor; that we have been guilty of no prevarication; that we have made no compromise with crime; that we have not feared any odium whatsoever, in the long warfare which we have carried on with the crimes — with the vices — with the exorbitant wealth — with the enormous and overpowering influence of Eastern corruption. This war, my lords, we have waged for twenty-two years, and the conflict has been fought at your lordships' bar for the last seven years. My lords, twenty-two years is a great space in the scale of the life of man; it is no inconsiderable space in the history of a great nation. A business which has so long occupied the councils and the tribunals of Great Britain, cannot possibly be huddled

over in the course of vulgar, trite, and transitory events. Nothing but some of those great revolutions that break the traditionary chain of human memory, and alter the very face of nature itself, can possibly obscure it. My lords, we are all elevated to a degree of importance by it; the meanness of us will, by means of it, more or less become the concern of posterity, if we are yet to hope for such a thing in the present state of the world¹ as a recording, retrospective, civilized posterity; but this is in the hands of the great Disposer of events: it is not ours to settle how it shall be. My lords, your House yet stands; it stands as a great edifice; but let me say, that it stands in the midst of ruins; in the midst of the ruins that have been made by the greatest moral earthquake that ever convulsed and shattered this globe of ours. My lords, it has pleased Providence to place us in such a state, that we appear every moment to be upon the verge of some great mutations. There is one thing, and one thing only, which defies all mutation; that which existed before the world, and will survive the fabric of the world itself; I mean justice; that justice, which, emanating from the Divinity, has a place in the breast of every one of us, given us for our guide with regard to ourselves and with regard to others, and which will stand after this globe is burned to ashes, our advocate or our accuser before the great Judge, when He comes to call upon us for the tenor of a well-spent life.

My lords, the Commons will share in every fate with your lordships; there is nothing sinister which can happen to you, in which we shall not be involved; and if it should so happen that we shall be subjected to some of those frightful changes which we have seen — if it should happen that your lordships, stripped of all the decorous distinctions of human society, should, by hands at once base and cruel, be led to those scaffolds and machines of murder, upon which great kings and glorious queens have shed their blood, amidst the prelates, amidst the nobles, amidst the magistrates who supported their thrones, may you in those moments feel that consolation which I am persuaded they felt in the critical moments of their dreadful agony!

My lords, there is a consolation, and a great consolation it is, which often happens to oppressed virtue and fallen dignity; it often happens that the very oppressors and

¹ Burke was speaking at the height of the French Revolution.

Contrasting condition

persecutors themselves are forced to bear testimony in its favor. I do not like to go for instances a great way back into antiquity. I know very well that length of time operates so as to give an air of the fabulous to remote events, which lessens the interest and weakens the application of examples. I wish to come nearer to the present time. Your lordships know and have heard, for which of us has not known and heard, of the parliament of Paris? The parliament of Paris had an origin very, very similar to that of the great court before which I stand; the parliament of Paris continued to have a great resemblance to it in its constitution, even to its fall; the parliament of Paris, my lords, was; it is gone! It has passed away; it has vanished like a dream! It fell, pierced by the sword of the *Compte de Mirabeau*. And yet I will say, that that man, at the time of his inflicting the death wound of that parliament, produced at once the shortest and the grandest funeral oration that ever was or could be made upon the departure of a great court of magistracy. Though he had himself smarted under its lash, as every one knows who knows his history (and he was elevated to dreadful notoriety in history), yet when he pronounced the death sentence upon that parliament, and inflicted the mortal wound, he declared that his motives for doing it were merely political, and that their hands were as pure as those of justice itself, which they administered — a great and

glorious exit, my lords, of a great and glorious body! And never was a eulogy pronounced upon a body more deserved. They were persons in nobility of rank, in amplitude of fortune, in weight of authority, in depth of learning, inferior to few of those that hear me. My lords, it was but the other day that they submitted their necks to the axe; but their honor was unwounded. Their enemies, the persons who sentenced them to death, were lawyers, full of subtlety; they were enemies, full of malice; yet lawyers full of subtlety, and enemies full of malice, as they were, they did not dare to reproach them with having supported the wealthy, the great, and powerful, and of having oppressed the weak and feeble, in any of their judgments, or of having perverted justice in any one instance whatever, through favor, through interest, or cabal.

My lords, if you must fall, may you so fall! But if you stand, and stand I trust you will, together with the fortune of this ancient monarchy — together with the ancient laws and liberties of this great and illustrious kingdom, may you stand as unimpeached in honor as in power; may you stand not as a substitute for virtue, but as an ornament of virtue, as a security for virtue; may you stand long, and long stand the terror of tyrants; may you stand the refuge of afflicted nations; may you stand a sacred temple, for the perpetual residence of an inviolable justice.

WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800)

William Cowper was born in 1731 in a quiet country village, where his father was rector of the parish. He came of a good family; many of his relatives were people of influence and distinction. His first sorrow came to him at the age of six, when he lost his mother, his childhood memories of whom are touchingly recorded in his poem *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture*. At the age of ten he was sent to Westminster School, whence he went at eighteen to the Middle Temple in London as a student of the law. He was called to the bar at the age of twenty-three.

While still a law-student, he suffered from his first attack of mental disorder. After some ten years of not very exacting legal practice, years in which he had much leisure for reading and social conversation, his disease returned in a very violent form of religious melancholia with suicidal mania. He believed that he had committed the unpardonable sin, and that he was irrevocably damned. For more than a year he was confined in a private mad-house. Then suddenly came upon him a sense of God's love and forgiveness, and he was discharged as cured. But he had no heart to return to the life of London. He took lodgings at Huntingdon, near Cambridge, in the family of a clergyman named Unwin, whose gracious and lovely wife, Mary, a woman seven years older than Cowper, became the closest and dearest friend of his life, an elder sister, almost a mother, to him until her death four years before his own. Lovers of English poetry owe a lasting debt of gratitude to Mary Unwin. Cowper's own sense of what he owed her is expressed in his lines *To Mary*. After her husband's death, she and Cowper went to live at the little village of Olney in Buckinghamshire, attracted thither by the fame of an evangelical clergyman. Their life was one

of cheerful but intense and deep religious piety, which is reflected in Cowper's hymns and in the pages of *The Task*. Mary Unwin's devotion to Cowper nursed him through repeated relapses into his mental trouble. It was in one of these periods of depression that he wrote *The Castaway*. Cowper died in 1800.

It was for a means of escape from his distress of mind and spirit that Cowper turned to the serious work of a poet. As a younger man, he had occasionally written verse; but the work for which he is remembered was not done till he was fifty years old. In 1782 appeared a volume of Poems, written in heroic couplet, on such themes as "The Progress of Error," "Truth," "Conversation." Then in 1785 came his greatest work, *The Task*. A friend, Lady Austen, asked him to write in blank verse, and playfully assigned him as subject the parlor sofa. But the "task" so assigned rapidly developed beyond its playful beginning. Its six books have no single subject. In them Cowper passes in the manner of conversation from one theme to another, though always with graceful transitions. What we have is a picture of his own daily life, of the life of the surrounding countryside, and of the thoughts which fill his mind. The manner is conversational, colored by tender sentiment, lightened by quiet wit and humor, with an occasional flash of indignation at the spread of evil manners. The poem has in the highest degree the quality of poetic truth. Cowper describes what he has himself seen, and with minute accuracy of detail. Even more than Wordsworth, whom he in many ways resembles, he writes with his eye on the object. His own thoughts and feelings he records with an intimate sincerity of self-revelation wholly unlike the writing of most eighteenth-century poets. Indeed the charm of his poetry is in large measure the charm of his own gracious, kindly soul.

A convenient single-volume edition of Cowper is that edited by H. S. Milford for the Oxford University Press. An interesting biography is that of Goldwin Smith in the English Men of Letters series. A selection from his charming personal letters is published in Everyman's Library (Dutton).

WALKING WITH GOD

Gen. v, 24

O! for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the LORD?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of JESUS, and his word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void,
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn, 15
And drove thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be;
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee. 20

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

THE TASK

1785

BOOK IV

THE WINTER EVENING

Argument of the Fourth Book: The post comes in — The newspaper is read — The world contemplated at a distance — Address to winter — The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones — Address to evening — A brown study — Fall of snow in the evening — The waggoner — A poor family-piece — The rural thief — Public houses — The multitude of them censured — The farmer's daughter: what she was — what she is — The simplicity of country manners almost lost — Causes of the change — Desertion of the country by the rich — Neglect of magistrates — The militia principally in fault — The new recruit and his transformation — Reflection on bodies corporate — The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

Hark! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder
bridge,

That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the
moon

Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright; —
He comes, the herald of a noisy world, 5
With spattered boots, strapped waist, and
frozen locks;

News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge, the close-packed load
behind,

Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn: 10
And, having dropped th' expected bag, pass
on.

He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;

To him indifferent whether grief or joy. 15
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears, that trickled down the writer's
cheeks

Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent
swains, 20

Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But oh th' important budget! ushered in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings? have our troops
awaked? 25

Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,
Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply, 31
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh — I long to know them
all;

I burn to set th' imprisoned wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once
again. 35

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters
fast,

Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each, 40
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

Not such his evening, who with shining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeezed
And bored with elbow-points through both
his sides,

Out-scolds the ranting actor on the stage: 45
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the
breath

Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work! 50

Which not even critics criticise; that holds
Inquisitive attention, while I read,
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the
fair,

Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to
break;

What is it, but a map of busy life, 55
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?

Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
That tempts ambition. On the summit see
The seals of office glitter in his eyes;
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them! At
his heels, 60

Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,

And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him
down,

And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence in soft
Meanders lubricate the course they take; 65
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved
T' engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness! it claims at least this
praise, 70

The dearth of information and good sense
That it foretells us always comes to pass.
Cataracts of declamation thunder here;
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wanders, lost; 75
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks,
And lilies for the brows of faded age, 80
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heaven, earth, and ocean, plundered of their
sweets,

Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons, and city feasts, and favorite airs,
Æthereal journies, submarine exploits, 85
And Katterfelto,¹ with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.

'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of
retreat

To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd; 90
To hear the roar she sends through all her
gates

At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on th' uninjured ear.
Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem ad-
vanced 95

To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.
It turns submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations; I behold
The tumult, and am still. The sound of
war 100

Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the
pride

And avarice that make man a wolf to man;
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats
By which he speaks the language of his
heart, 105

And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flower to flower, so he from land to land:

¹ A popular sleight-of-hand performer, who advertised
with the phrase: "Wonders! Wonders! Wonders!"

The manners, customs, policy of all
 Pay contribution to the store he gleans; 110
 He sucks intelligence in every clime,
 And spreads the honey of his deep research
 At his return — a rich repast for me.
 He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
 Ascend his topmast, through his peering
 eyes 115

Discover countries, with a kindred heart
 Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes;
 While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
 Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.

Oh Winter, ruler of th' inverted year, 120
 Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled,
 Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy
 cheeks

Fringed with a beard made white with other
 snows

Than those of age, thy forehead wrapt in
 clouds,

A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy
 throne 125

A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
 But urged by storms along its slippery way,
 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
 And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the
 sun

A prisoner in the yet undawning east, 130
 Shortening his journey between morn and
 noon,

And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
 Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
 Compensating his loss with added hours
 Of social converse and instructive ease, 135

And gathering, at short notice, in one group
 The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
 Not less dispersed by day-light and its cares.
 I crown thee king of intimate delights,
 Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happi-
 ness, 140

And all the comforts that the lowly roof
 Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours
 Of long uninterrupted evening, know.
 No rattling wheels stop short before these
 gates;

No powdered pert, proficient in the art 145
 Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
 Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
 Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the
 sound,

The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:
 But here the needle plies its busy task, 150
 The pattern grows; the well-depicted flower,
 Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
 Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and
 sprigs,

And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
 Follow the nimble finger of the fair; 155

A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that
 blow

With most success when all besides decay.
 The poet's or historian's page, by one
 Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest;
 The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet
 sounds

The touch from many a trembling chord
 shakes out; 161

And the clear voice symphonious, yet
 distinct,

And in the charming strife triumphant still;
 Beguile the night, and set a keener edge

On female industry: the threaded steel 165
 Flies swiftly, and, unfelt, the task proceeds.

The volume closed, the customary rites
 Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal;

Such as the mistress of the world once found
 Delicious, when her patriots of high note, 170

Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
 And under an old oak's domestic shade,

Enjoyed — spare feast! — a radish and an
 egg!

Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
 Nor such as with a frown forbids the play 175

Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth:
 Nor do we madly, like an impious world,

Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
 That made them an intruder on their joys,

Start at his awful name, or deem his praise 180
 A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,

Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
 While we retrace with memory's pointing

wand,
 That calls the past to our exact review,

The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken
 snare, 185

The disappointed foe, deliverance found
 Unlooked for, life preserved and peace re-

stored —
 Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.

Oh evenings worthy of the gods! exclaimed
 The Sabine bard. Oh evenings, I reply, 190

More to be prized and coveted than yours,
 As more illumined, and with nobler truths,

That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.
 Is winter hideous in a garb like this?

Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of
 lamps, 195

The pent-up breath of an unsavory throng,
 To thaw him into feeling; or the smart

And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits
 Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?

The self-complacent actor, when he views 200
 (Stealing a side-long glance at a full house)

The slope of faces, from the floor to th' roof,
 (As if one master-spring controlled them all)

Relaxed into an universal grin,

Sees not a countenance there that speaks of
joy 205

Half so refined or so sincere as our's.
Cards were superfluous here, with all the
tricks

That idleness has ever yet contrived
To fill the void of an unfurnished brain,
To palliate dulness, and give time a shove. 210
Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
Unsoiled, and swift, and of a silken sound;
But the world's time is time in masquerade!
Their's, should I paint him, has his pinions
fledged

With motley plumes; and, where the peacock
shows 215

His azure eyes, is tintured black and red
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.
What should be and what was an hour-glass
once,

Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mast 221
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
Thus decked, he charms a world whom
fashion blinds

To his true worth, most pleased when idle
most;

Whose only happy are their wasted hours. 225
Even misses, at whose age their mothers wore
The back-string and the bib, assume the
dress

Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
Of card-devoted time, and, night by night,
Placed at some vacant corner of the board, 230
Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
As he that travels far oft turns aside

To view some rugged rock or mouldering
tower, 235

Which, seen, delights him not; then, coming
home,

Describes and prints it, that the world may
know

How far he went for what was nothing worth;
So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread,
With colors mixed for a far different use, 240
Paint cards and dolls, and every idle thing
That fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west, 245
With matron-step slow-moving, while the
night

Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand em-
ployed

In letting fall the curtain of repose
On bird and beast, the other charged for man

With sweet oblivion of the cares of day: 250
Not sumptuously adorned, nor needing aid,
Like homely featured night, of clustering
gems;

A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
No less than her's, not worn indeed on high 255
With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary
calm,

Or make me so. Composure is thy gift: 260
And, whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,
When they command whom man was born
to please; 265

I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to
blaze

With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk 270
Whole, without stooping, towering crest and
all,

My pleasures, too, begin. But me, perhaps,
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits 275
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.
Not undelightful is an hour to me
So spent in parlor twilight: such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new
theme 280

Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.
Lough ye, who boast your more mercurial
powers,

That never feel a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one; I am conscious, and confess,
Fearless, a soul that does not always think. 285
Me oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,
Soothed with a waking dream of houses,
towers,

Trees, churches, and strange visages, ex-
pressed

In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw. 290

Nor less amused have I quiescent watched
The sooty films that play upon the bars,
Pendulous, and foreboding, in the view
Of superstition, prophesying still,
Though still deceived, some stranger's near
approach. 295

'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,

the great & the small

And sleeps and is refreshed. Meanwhile the
face

Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man 300
Were tasked to his full strength, absorbed and
lost.

Thus off, reclined at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons
home

The recollected powers; and, snapping
short 305

The glassy threads, with which the fancy
weaves

Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess; and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
The silence and the warmth enjoyed
within! 310

I saw the woods and fields, at close of day,
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately
waved

The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturned so lately by the forceful share. 315

I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His favorite herb; while all the leafless groves,
That skirt th' horizon, wore a sable hue, 320
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.

To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently performed,
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes. 325

Fast falls a fleecy shower: the downy flakes,
Descending, and with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives

Gladly the thickening mantle; and the
green 330

And tender blade, that feared the chilling
blast,

Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

In such a world; so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted; or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side; 335
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguished than ourselves; that
thus

We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathise with others, suffering
more. 340

Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close

To the clogged wheels; and in its sluggish
pace, 345

Noiseless, appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While every breath, by respiration strong
Forced downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, formed to
bear 350

The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes, and puckered cheeks,
and teeth

Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with
both

He brandishes his pliant length of whip, 355
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.

Oh happy; and, in my account, denied
That sensibility of pain with which

Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou!
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed 360
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpaired.

The learned finger never need explore
Thy vigorous pulse; and the unheathful east,
That breathes the spleen, and searches
every bone

Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee. 365
Thy days roll on, exempt from household care;

The waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts,
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy
care.

Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou ap-
pear'st, 370

Yet show that thou hast mercy! which the
great,

With needless hurry whirled from place to
place,

Humane as they would seem, not always
show.

Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat;
Such claim compassion in a night like this, 375
And have a friend in every feeling heart.

Warmed, while it lasts, by labor, all day
long

They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool.

The frugal housewife trembles when she
lights 380

Her scanty stock of brush-wood, blazing
clear,

But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well;

And, while her infant race, with outspread
hands

And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the
sparks, 385

Retires, content to quake, so they be
warmed.

The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil;
Yet he, too, finds his own distress in
their's. 390

The taper soon extinguished, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Just when the day declined, and the brown
loaf

Lodged on the shelf, half eaten, without sauce
Of savory cheese, or butter, costlier still; 395
Sleep seems their only refuge: for, alas,
Where penury is felt the thought is chained,
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few!
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the
care

Ingenious parsimony takes but just 400
Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,
Skillet, and old carved chest, from public
sale.

They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands; but other boast have
none

To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to
beg, 405

Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard earned,
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure 410
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of distribution; liberal of their aid
To clamorous importunity in rags,
But oft-times deaf to suppliant, who would
blush 415

To wear a tattered garb however coarse,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth:
These ask with painful shyness, and, refused
Because deserving, silently retire!

But be ye of good courage! Time itself 420
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give
increase;

And all your numerous progeny, well-trained,
But helpless, in few years shall find their
hands,

And labor too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
What, conscious of your virtues, we can
spare, 425

Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may
send.

I mean the man, who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.

But poverty, with most who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe; 430
Th' effect of laziness or sottish waste.

Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder; much solicitous how best

He may compensate for a day of sloth
By works of darkness and nocturnal
wrong. 435

Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's
hedge,

Plashed neatly, and secured with driven
stakes

Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by
strength,

Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil — 440

An ass's burden — and, when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot, steals fast away.

Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stacked pile of riven logs and roots

From his pernicious force. Nor will he
leave 445

Unwrenched the door, however well secured,
Where Chanticleer amidst his haram sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitched from the
perch,

He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain, 450

And loudly wondering at the sudden
change. —

Nor this to feed his own! 'Twere some
excuse

Did pity of their sufferings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. — But
they 455

Neglected pine at home; themselves, as more
Exposed than others, with less scruple made

His victims, robbed of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst

Of ruinous ebriety that prompts 460
His every action, and imbrutes the man.

Oh for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own; who persecutes the
blood

He gave them in his children's veins, and
hates

And wrongs the woman he has sworn to
love! 465

Pass where we may, through city or
through town,

Village, or hamlet, of this merry land,
Though lean and beggared, every twentieth

pace
Conducts th' unguarded nose to such a whiff

Of stale debauch, forth-issuing from the
styes 470

That law has licensed, as makes temperance
reel.

There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,

The lackey, and the groom: the craftsman
there

Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil; 475
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the
shears,

And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk! The fiddle
screams

Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wailed
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard: 480
Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme;
while she,

Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perched on the sign-post, holds with even
hand

Her undecided scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance; in that, of pride; 485
And smiles, delighted with th' eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound
The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those which modern senators employ,
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for
fame! 491

Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill! — 'tis here they
learn 495

The road that leads, from competence and
peace,

To indigence and rapine; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumbered lap, and casts them
out.

But censure profits little: vain th' attempt 500
To advertise in verse a public pest,
That, like the filth with which the peasant
feeds

His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
Th' excise is fattened with the rich result
Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks, 505
For ever dribbling out their base contents,
Touched by the Midas finger of the state,
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
Drink, and be mad, then; 'tis your country
bids!

Gloriously drunk, obey th' important call! 510
Her cause demands th' assistance of your
throats; —

Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.
Would I had fallen upon those happier
days

That poets celebrate; those golden times,
And those Arcadian scenes, that Maro
sings, 515

And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.
Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had
hearts

That felt their virtues: innocence, it seems,

From courts dismissed, found shelter in the
groves;

The footsteps of simplicity, impressed 520
Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing)
Then were not all effaced: then speech pro-
fane,

And manners profligate, were rarely found;
Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaimed.
Vain wish! those days were never: airy
dreams 525

Sat for the picture; and the poet's hand,
Imparting substance to an empty shade,
Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.

Grant it: — I still must envy them an age
That favored such a dream; in days like
these 530

Impossible, when virtue is so scarce,
That to suppose a scene where she presides,
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.
No: we are polished now! the rural lass,
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace, 535
Her artless manners, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost! 539
Her head, adorned with lappets pinned aloft,
And ribbands streaming gay, superbly raised,
And magnified beyond all human size,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains;
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form 545
Ill propped upon French heels, she might be
deemed

(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank
Too proud for dairy work, or sale of eggs.
Expect her soon with foot-boy at her heels, 550
No longer blushing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care!

The town has tinged the country; and the
stain

Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion
runs 555

Down into scenes still rural; but, alas,
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now!
Time was when, in the pastoral retreat,
Th' unguarded door was safe; men did not
watch

T' invade another's right, or guard their
own. 560

Then sleep was undisturbed by fear, unscared
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspicious nights, 565
And slumbers unalarmed! Now, ere you
sleep,

See that your polished arms be primed with
care,
And drop the night-bolt;—ruffians are
abroad;

And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your
ear 570

To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
Even day-light has its dangers; and the walk
Through pathless wastes and woods, uncon-
scious once

Of other tenants than melodious birds,
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold. 575
Lamented change! to which full many a
cause

Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails. 579

Increase of power begets increase of wealth;
Wealth luxury; and luxury excess;
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale 585

Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The license of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office; and themselves, intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus 590
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might pro-
tect.

Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump convivial parson often bears 595
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
His reverence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
When he should strike he trembles, and sets
free, 600

Himself enslaved by terror of the band,
Th' audacious convict, whom he dares not
bind.

Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
He too may have his vice, and sometimes
prove 604

Less dainty than becomes his grave outside
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milk-white hand; the palm is hardly
clean—

But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touched
Corruption! Whoso seeks an audit here 610
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wild-fowl or venison; and his errand speeds.

But faster far, and more than all the rest,
A noble cause, which none who bears a spark

Of public virtue ever wished removed, 615
Works the deplored and mischievous effect.
'Tis universal soldiership has stabbed
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
Of those that bear them, in whatever
cause, 620

Seem most at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with serious thought.
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own simple pleasures; now and
then 625

A wrestling-match, a foot-race, or a fair;
Is ballotted, and trembles at the news:
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and, mumbling,
swears

A bible-oath to be whate'er they please,
To do he knows not what! The task per-
formed, 630
That instant he becomes the sergeant's
care,

His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected
looks,

Procure him many a curse. By slow
degrees, 635

Unapt to learn, and formed of stubborn stuff,
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well:
He stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk;
He steps right onward, martial in his air, 640
His form and movement; is as smart above
As meal and larded locks can make him;
wears

His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace;
And, his three years of heroship expired,
Returns indignant to the slighted plough. 645
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum
Attends him; drives his cattle to a march;
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
But with his clumsy port the wretch has
lost 650

His ignorance and harmless manners too!
To swear, to game, to drink; to show at home
By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath-breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad;
T'astonish and to grieve his gazing friends, 655
To break some maiden's and his mother's
heart;

To be a pest where he was useful once;
Are his sole aim, and all his glory, now!

Man in society is like a flower
Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone 660
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
Shine out; there only reach their proper use.

But man, associated and leagued with man
By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond
For interest-sake, or swarming into clans 665
Beneath one head for purposes of war,
Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
And bundled close to fill some crowded vast,
Fades rapidly, and, by compression marred,
Contracts defilement not to be endured. 670
Hence chartered boroughs are such public
plagues;

And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combined,

Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main. 675
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature; and, disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man, 680
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dyeing the white
robe

Of innocent commercial justice red.
Hence, too, the field of glory, as the world
Misleads it, dazzled by its bright array, 685
With all its majesty of thundering pomp,
Enchanting music, and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school where thoughtlessness is
taught

On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for every vice. 690

But, slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandoned, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
That flattered me with hopes of earthly
bliss, 695

I never framed a wish, or formed a plan,
But there I laid the scene. There early
strayed

My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural; rural, too, 700
The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was
tuned

To Nature's praises. Heroes and their
feats 705

Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,
The rustic throng beneath his favorite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:
New to my taste, his Paradise surpassed 710
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence. I danced for joy.

I marvelled much that, at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then
first

Engaged my wonder; and, admiring still, 715
And still admiring, with regret supposed
The joy half lost because not sooner found.
Thee too, enamored of the life I loved,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determined, and possessing it at last 720
With transports such as favored lovers feel,
I studied, prized, and wished that I had
known,

Ingenious Cowley! and, though now re-
claimed

By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit 725
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools.
I still revere thee, courtly though retired;
Though stretched at ease in Chertsey's silent
bowers,

Not unemployed; and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse. 730

'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's
works

Is an ingredient in the compound man,
Infused at the creation of the kind.

And, though th' Almighty Maker has
throughout

Discriminated each from each, by strokes 735
And touches of his hand, with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points — yet this obtains in
all,

That all discern a beauty in his works,
And all can taste them: minds that have been
formed 740

And tutored, with a relish more exact,
But none without some relish, none un-
moved.

It is a flame that dies not even there,
Where nothing feeds it: neither business,
crowds,

Nor habits of luxurious city-life; 745
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms; quench it, or abate.

The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air, 750
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they
cheer

The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
Even in the stifling bosom of the town,
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has
charms

That soothe the rich possessor; much con-
soled, 755

That here and there some sprigs of mournful
mint,

Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well
 He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
 That nature lives; that sight-refreshing green
 Is still the livery she delights to wear, 760
 Though sickly samples of th' exuberant
 whole.

What are the casements lined with creeping
 herbs,

The prouder sashes fronted with a range
 Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
 The Frenchman's darling? are they not all
 proofs 765

That man, immured in cities, still retains
 His inborn inextinguishable thirst
 Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
 By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
 The most unfurnished with the means of
 life, 770

And they that never pass their brick-wall
 bounds

To range the fields and treat their lungs with
 air,

Yet feel the burning instinct: over head
 Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
 And watered duly. There the pitcher
 stands 775

A fragment, and the spoutless tea-pot there;
 Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
 The country, with what ardor he contrives
 A peep at nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health, and
 ease, 780

And contemplation, heart-consoling joys
 And harmless pleasures, in the thronged
 abode

Of multitudes unknown! hail, rural life!
 Address himself who will to the pursuit
 Of honors, or emolument, or fame; 785
 I shall not add myself to such a chase,
 Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
 Some must be great. Great offices will
 have

Great talents. And God gives to every
 man

The virtue, temper, understanding, taste, 790
 That lifts him into life; and lets him fall
 Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.

To the deliverer of an injured land
 He gives a tongue t' enlarge upon, an heart
 To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs; 795
 To monarchs dignity; to judges sense;

To artists ingenuity and skill;
 To me an unambitious mind, content

In the low vale of life, that early felt
 A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long 800

Found here that leisure and that ease I
 wished.

i Mignonette. [Cowper.]

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

The Royal George, flagship of Admiral Kempenfelt, while refitting at Portsmouth, was heeled over to repair a leak below the water-line. Suddenly the vessel went down with the loss of eight hundred lives, including that of the admiral. The date of the disaster was August, 1782. In the preceding year, Kempenfelt had won a brilliant victory over a greatly superior French fleet under De Guichen.

Toll for the brave —

The brave! that are no more:

All sunk beneath the wave,

Fast by their native shore.

Eight hundred of the brave, 5

Whose courage well was tried,

Had made the vessel heel

And laid her on her side;

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,

And she was overset; 10

Down went the Royal George,

With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave —

Brave Kempenfelt is gone,

His last sea-fight is fought, 15

His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle,

No tempest gave the shock,

She sprang no fatal leak,

She ran upon no rock; 20

His sword was in the sheath,

His fingers held the pen,

When Kempenfelt went down

With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up, 25

Once dreaded by our foes,

And mingle with your cup

The tears that England owes;

Her timbers yet are sound,

And she may float again, 30

Full charged with England's thunder,

And plough the distant main;

But Kempenfelt is gone,

His victories are o'er;

And he and his Eight hundred 35

Must plough the wave no more.

1782.

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK

Oh that those lips had language! Life has
 passed

With me but roughly since I heard thee last.

Those lips are thine — thy own sweet smiles
I see,

The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else, how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears
away!" 6

The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the
same. 10

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
Oh welcome guest, though unexpected, here!
Who bidd'st me honor with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone, 15
But gladly, as the precept were her own;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief —
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she. 20

My mother! when I learned that thou wast
dead,

Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unseen, a
kiss; 25

Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss —
Ah that maternal smile! it answers — Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window,
drew 30

A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such? — It was. — Where thou
art gone

Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting sound shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens grieved themselves at my concern, 36

Oft gave me promise of a quick return.
What ardently I wished, I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived;
By disappointment every day beguiled, 40
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad *to-morrow* came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learned at last submission to my lot;
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er
forgot. 45

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no
more,

Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way, 49
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt

In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capt,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we called the pastoral house our
own.

Short-lived possession! but the record fair
That memory keeps of all thy kindness
there, 55

Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly
laid;

Thy morning bounties ere I left my home, 60
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and
glowed;

All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no
fall, 65

Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and
brakes

That humor interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so, to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay 70
Such honors to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed
here.

Could time, his flight reversed, restore the
hours,

When, playing with thy vesture's tissued
flowers, 75

The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the
while,

Would'st softly speak, and stroke my head
and smile)

Could those few pleasant hours again
appear, 80

Might one wish bring them, would I wish
them here?

I would not trust my heart — the dear
delight

Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might. —
But no — what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much, 85
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's
coast

(The storms all weathered and the ocean
crossed)

Shoots into port at some well-havened isle, 90
Where spices breathe and brighter seasons
smile,

There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers

gay; ⁹⁵

So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached
the shore

"Where tempests never beat nor billows
roar," ¹

And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life, long since, has anchored at thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest, ¹⁰⁰
Always from port withheld, always dis-
tressed —

Me howling winds drive devious, tempest
tossed,

Sails ript, seams opening wide, and compass
lost,

And day by day some current's thwarting
force

Sets me more distant from a prosperous
course. ¹⁰⁵

But oh the thought, that thou art safe, and
he!

That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions
rise — ¹¹⁰

The son of parents passed into the skies.
And now, farewell — time, unrevoked, has run
His wonted course, yet what I wished is
done.

By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem t' have lived my childhood o'er
again; ¹¹⁵

To have renewed the joys that once were
mine,

Without the sin of violating thine:

And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic shew of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft —
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me
left. ¹²¹

1790.

TO MARY

The twentieth year is well-nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast;
Ah would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow, ⁵
I see thee daily weaker grow —
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

* Garth. [Cowper.]

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore, ¹⁰
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will, ¹⁵
My Mary!

But well thou played'st the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary! ²⁰

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright, ²⁵
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see? ³⁰
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet, gently prest, press gently mine, ³⁵
My Mary!

And then I feel that still I hold
A richer store ten thousandfold
Than misers fancy in their gold,
My Mary! ⁴⁰

Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st,
That now at every step thou mov'st
Upheld by two; yet still thou lov'st,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill, ⁴⁵
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show ⁵⁰
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last, ⁵⁵
My Mary!

1793.

THE CASTAWAY

Obscurest night involved the sky,
 Th' Atlantic billows roared,
 When such a destined wretch as I,
 Washed headlong from on board,
 Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
 His floating home for ever left. 5

No braver chief could Albion boast
 Than he with whom he went,
 Nor ever ship left Albion's coast,
 With warmer wishes sent. 10
 He loved them both, but both in vain,
 Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
 Expert to swim, he lay;
 Nor soon he felt his strength decline, 15
 Or courage die away;
 But waged with death a lasting strife,
 Supported by despair of life.

He shouted: nor his friends had failed
 To check the vessel's course, 20
 But so the furious blast prevailed,
 That, pitiless perforce,
 They left their outcast mate behind,
 And scudded still before the wind.

Some succor yet they could afford; 25
 And, such as storms allow,
 The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
 Delayed not to bestow.
 But he (they knew) nor ship, nor shore,
 Whate'er they gave, should visit more. 30

Nor, cruel as it seemed, could he
 Their haste himself condemn,
 Aware that flight, in such a sea,
 Alone could rescue them;

Yet bitter felt it still to die 35
 Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
 In ocean, self-upheld;
 And so long he, with unspent power,
 His destiny repelled; 40
 And ever, as the minutes flew,
 Entreated help, or cried — Adieu!

At length, his transient respite past,
 His comrades, who before
 Had heard his voice in every blast, 45
 Could catch the sound no more.
 For then, by toil subdued, he drank
 The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him: but the page
 Of narrative sincere, 50
 That tells his name, his worth, his age,
 Is wet with Anson's¹ tear.
 And tears by bards or heroes shed
 Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream, 55
 Descanting on his fate,
 To give the melancholy theme
 A more enduring date:
 But misery still delights to trace
 Its semblance in another's case. 60

No voice divine the storm allayed,
 No light propitious shone;
 When, snatched from all effectual aid,
 We perished, each alone: 65
 But I beneath a rougher sea,
 And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.

1799.

¹ Lord Anson, admiral of the fleet, and author of a *Voyage Around the World*, in which the story is told.



ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)

Robert Burns was born at Alloway, near Ayr, in south-western Scotland, in 1759. His father, a tenant-farmer who had built with his own hands the clay cottage in which the poet was born, was an intelligent man, sincerely religious and of admirable character, but never successful in his calling. The household in which Burns grew to manhood is pictured with some idealizing in the *Cotter's Saturday Night*. Burns had a few years of schooling, during which he read all the stray books on which he could lay his hands, and acquired a fair reading knowledge of French. But when he was a lad of fifteen, he was already doing the full work of a farm-laborer. One must never forget that Burns was a peasant, though a very extraordinary one. Until he was twenty-eight he had never travelled more than ten miles from his birthplace. His poems and songs were written in the first instance for his friends and neighbors in rural Scotland. Discouraged by the hardship and poverty of his life, he decided to emigrate to Jamaica. To raise money for his voyage, he published in 1786, at the near-by town of Kilmarnock, a collection of his poems. It cleared him twenty pounds, and made a small sensation. This edition exhausted, he decided to print another, this time

at Edinburgh. Late in the year Burns went himself to Edinburgh, where he stayed off and on for a little over a year. The fashionable and literary society of the capital made much of him. The Edinburgh edition of 1787 brought him in five hundred pounds, out of which he made a generous gift to his brother Gilbert, still struggling on at the old farm in Ayrshire. His Edinburgh friends dined him and wine him; but for practical encouragement of his genius they could do nothing better than get him an appointment in the excise service, where he was to measure beer-barrels and prevent smuggling. He took a farm at Ellisland near Dumfries, and combined farming with his duties as exciseman. There, and later at the town of Dumfries, he lived for the ten years that remained to him of life, composing in his leisure time the songs which are the most popular part of his work. For them he refused to receive any remuneration; they were done for old Scotland's sake as a patriotic service of love. These years were not happy. His duties in the excise did not interest him; his outspoken sympathy with the cause of the French Revolution prevented any advancement. The old poverty was closing in about him. He frequently drank to excess. In 1796 he died, a disappointed man, only thirty-seven years old, and Scotland lost her most famous poet.

Burns's songs are many of them love songs, and Burns "dearly loved the lassies; O." A rather bewildering multiplicity of them appear in his verses. In the spring of 1786, Jean Armour, daughter of a master mason at Mauchline, was found to be with child by him; and Burns gave her a written paper acknowledging her as his wife. But Jean's father refused to recognize the marriage. Burns found a new love in Mary Campbell, "Highland Mary," to whom he betrothed himself, and whom he planned to take with him to Jamaica. She died of a fever before the end of the year. In 1788 he was formally married to Jean Armour. But Jean and Mary are but two among many; Burns was always in love.

The fame of Burns spread rapidly. He was hailed as the "peasant-poet," the "child of nature," who owed nothing to the schools — the triumphant justification of the romantic revolt against civilization. But this view of him is at most only part of the truth. The *Cotter's Saturday Night* owes much to the literary tradition of Gray's *Elegy* and Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. The lines *To a Mouse* echo the school of eighteenth-century "sensibility." More important is the debt which Burns owes to the literature of his native Scotland, from which he derived the suggestions for most of his songs, his homely realism and love of the grotesque, and many of his metrical forms. But what he borrowed he transformed by the power of his own original genius. His is the fire and energy, the passionate intensity, the love of his fellows which can make us feel that "a man's a man for a' that," even when his setting is the disreputable squalor of the *Jolly Beggars*. His is the vividness of realization which makes us half believe the grotesque rollicking tale of *Tam o' Shanter*. When he resings them, the old popular songs become masterpieces of lyric art.

Burns could write, when he chose, in standard English; but when he so wrote he was seldom himself. The reader who would really know him must accept him in the dialect of his own rural district.

The standard edition of Burns is the Centenary Edition of 1896 in four volumes. The text of this edition, and its brilliant introductory essay by W. E. Henley, are reproduced in the Cambridge Poets edition (Houghton Mifflin Company).

THE TWA DOGS

A TALE

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle
That bears the name of auld King Coil,¹
Upon a bonie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs, that were na thrang² at hame, 5
Forgathered ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
Was keepit for "his Honor's" pleasure:
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,³
Shewed he was nane o' Scotland's dogs; 10
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Whare sailors gang to fish for cod.⁴

His lockèd, lettered, braw brass collar
Shewed him the gentleman an' scholar;

But tho' he was o' high degree, 15
The fient¹ a pride, nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin,
Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gipsy's messin;²
At kirk or market, mill or smidde,
Nae tawted tyke,³ tho' e'er sae duddie,⁴ 20
But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
An' stroan't⁵ on stanes an' hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,⁶
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him, 25
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,⁷
Was made lang syne — Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash⁸ an' faithfu' tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.⁹ 30

1 i.e. Kyle, the middle district of Ayrshire.

2 busy.

3 ears.

4 i.e. Newfoundland.

1 devil.

2 cur.

3 no dog with matted hair.

4 ragged.

5 make water.

6 fellow.

7 i.e. in Macpherson's "Ossian."

8 wise.

9 leaped a ditch or wall.

His honest, sonsie,¹ baws'nt² a face
 Ay gat him friends in ilka place;
 His breast was white, his tousie back
 Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
 His gawsie³ tail, wi' upward curl,
 Hung owre his hurdies⁴ wi' a swirl.

35

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
 And unco pack an' thick thegither;⁵
 Wi' social nose whyles snuffed an' snowkit;⁶
 Whyles mice an' moudieworts⁷ they how-
 kit;⁸
 Whyles scoured awa' in lang excursion,
 An' worryed ither in diversion;
 Till tired at last wi' monie a farce,
 They sat them down upon their arse,
 An' there began a lang digression
 About the "lords o' the creation."

45

CÆSAR

I've aften wondered, honest Luath,
 What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
 An' when the gentry's life I saw,
 What way poor bodies lived ava.⁹

50

Our laird gets in his rackèd rents,
 His coals, his kain,¹⁰ an' a' his stents:¹¹
 He rises when he likes himsel;
 His flunkies answer at the bell;
 He ca's his coach; he ca's his horse;
 He draws a bonie silken purse,
 As lang's my tail, whare, thro' the steeks,¹²
 The yellow lettered Geordie keeks.¹³

55

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
 At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
 An' tho' the gentry first are stechin,¹⁴
 Yet ev'n the ha' folk¹⁵ fill their pechan¹⁶
 Wi' sauce, ragouts, an sic like trashtrie,
 That's little short o' downright wastrie:
 Our whipper-in, wee, blastit wonner,¹⁷
 Poor, worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
 Better than onie tenant-man
 His Honor has in a' the lan';
 An' tho' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,¹⁸
 I own it's past my comprehension.

70

LUATH

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't¹⁹
 enough:
 A cotter howkin in a sheugh,²⁰

Wi' dirty stanes biggin¹ a dyke,
 Baring a quarry, an' sic like;
 Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains,
 A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,²
 An' nought but his han' darg³ to keep
 Them right an' tight in thack an' rape.⁴

75

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
 Like loss o' health or want o' masters,
 Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
 An' they maun starve o' cauld and hunger:
 But how it comes, I never kend yet,
 They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
 An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies,⁵
 Are bred in sic a way as this is.

85

CÆSAR

But then to see how ye're neglectit,
 How huffed, an' cuffed, an' disrespeckit!
 Lord, man, our gentry care as little
 For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle;
 They gang as saucy by poor folk,
 As I wad by a stinking brock.⁶

90

I've noticed, on our laird's court-day,
 (An' monie a time my heart's been wae),
 Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
 How they maun thole⁷ a factor's snash:⁸
 He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear
 He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;⁹
 While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
 An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!

100

I see how folk live that hae riches;
 But surely poor-folk maun be wretches!

LUATH

They're nae sae wretched's ane wad think;
 Tho' constantly on poortith's¹⁰ brink,
 They're sae accustomed wi' the sight,
 The view o't gies them little fright.

105

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
 They're ay in less or mair provided;
 An' tho' fatigued wi' close employment,
 A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

110

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
 Their grushie¹¹ weans an' faithfu' wives;
 The prattling things are just their pride,
 That sweetens a' their fire-side.

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy¹² 115
 Can mak the bodies unco happy:

1 pleasant. 2 white-streaked.
 3 big and joyous. 4 buttocks.
 5 very confidential together. 6 sniffed.
 7 moles. 8 dug out. 9 at all.
 10 rents paid in kind. 11 dues. 12 stitches.
 13 peeps. 14 stuffing. 15 hall-folk (servants).
 16 stomach. 17 wonder (used ironically).
 18 put in their paunch. 19 worried.
 20 digging in the ditch.

1 building. 2 A litter of small ragged children.
 3 hand-labor. 4 thatch and rope (i.e. a roof).
 5 stalwart fellows and clever young women.
 6 badger. 7 endure. 8 abuse.
 9 seize their goods. 10 poverty's. 11 growing. 12 ale.

They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs;
They'll talk o' patronage an' priests,
Wi' kindling fury i' their breasts, 120
Or tell what new taxation's comin,
An' ferlie¹ at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-faced Hallowmass² returns,
They get the jovial, ranting kirns,³
When rural life, of ev'ry station, 125
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty win's; 130
The nappy reeks⁴ wi' mantling ream,⁵
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin⁶ pipe, an' sneeshin mill,⁷
Are handed round wi' right guid will;
The cantie⁸ auld folks crackin crouse,⁹ 135
The young anes ranting thro' the house —
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

Still it's owre true that ye hae said
Sic game is now owre aften played; 140
There's monie a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, fawsont¹⁰ folk,
Are riven out baith root an' branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster 145
In favor wi' some gentle master,
Wha, aiblins¹¹ thrang¹² a parliamentin',
For Britain's guid his saul indentin' —

CÆSAR

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it: 149
For Britain's guid! guid faith! I doubt it.
Say rather, gaun¹³ as Premiers lead him:
An' saying aye or no's they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading:
Or maybe, in a frolic daft, 155
To Hague or Calais taks a waft,
To mak a tour an' tak a whirl,
To learn *bon ton*, an' see the worl'.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails; 160
Or by Madrid he taks the rout,
To thrum guitars an' fecht wi' nowt;¹⁴
Or down Italian vista startles,
Whore-hunting amang groves o' myrtles;

Then bowses drumlie¹ German-water, 165
To mak himsel look fair an' fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.

For Britain's guid! for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud an' faction. 170

LUATH

Hech, man! dear sirs! is that the gate²
They waste sae monie a braw estate!
Are we sae foughten an' harassed
For gear ta gang that gate at last?

O would they stay aback frae courts, 175
An' please themsels wi' countra sports,
It wad for ev'ry ane be better,
The laird, the tenant, an' the cotter!
For thae frank, rantin, ramblin billies,
Fient haet³ o' them's ill-hearted fellows: 180
Except for breakin o' their timmer,⁴
Or speakin lightly o' their limmer,⁵
Or shootin of a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er-a-bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, master Cæsar: 185
Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure?
Nae cauld nor hunger e'er can steer⁶ them,
The vera thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR

Lord, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
The gentles, ye wad ne'er envy 'em! 190

It's true, they need na starve or sweat,
Thro' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,⁷
An' fill auld-age wi' grips an' granes:
But human bodies are sic fools, 195
For a' their colleges an' schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themsels to vex them;
An' ay the less they hae to sturt⁸ them,
In like proportion, less will hurt them. 200

A countra fellow at the pleugh,
His acre's tilled, he's right enough;
A countra girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen's done, she's unco weel;
But gentlemen, an' ladies warst, 205
Wi' ev'n down want o' wark are curst;
They loiter, lounging, lank an' lazy;
Tho' deil-haet ails them, yet uneasy;
Their days insipid, dull an' tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang an' restless. 210

1 marvel. 2 All Saints' Day (November 1).
3 harvest-homes. 4 smokes. 5 foam.
6 smoking. 7 i.e. snuff-box. 8 lively.
9 talking cheerfully. 10 seemly. 11 perhaps.
12 busy. 13 going. 14 fight with cattle (bulls).

1 muddy. 2 way. 3 not one (the devil have it).
4 timber. 5 mistress. 6 stir, molest.
7 crack their bones. 8 worry.

An' ev'n their sports, their balls an' races,
 Their galloping through public places,
 There's sic parade, sic pomp an' art,
 The joy can scarcely reach the heart.

The men cast out in party-matches, 215
 Then sowther 'a' in deep debauches;
 Ae night they're mad wi' drink an' whor-
 ing,
 Niest day their life is past enduring.

The ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
 As great an' gracious a' as sisters; 220
 But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
 They're a' run deils an' jads thegither.
 Whyles, owre the wee bit cup an' platie,
 They sip the scandal-potion pretty;
 Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuk 225
 Pore owre the devil's pictured beuks;²
 Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
 An' cheat like onie unhanged blackguard.

There's some exceptions, man an' woman;
 But this is Gentry's life in common. 230

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
 An' darker gloamin brought the night;
 The bum-clock³ hummed wi' lazy drone;
 The kye stood rowtin i' the loan;⁴
 When up they gat, an' shook their lugs, 235
 Rejoiced they were na *men*, but *dogs*;
 An' each took aff his several way,
 Resolved to meet some ither day.

1786.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
 Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

GRAY.

I

My loved, my honored, much respected
 friend!⁵

No mercenary bard his homage pays;
 With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
 My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and
 praise:

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays, 5
 The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;
 The native feelings strong, the guileless
 ways;

1 solder.

2 i.e. playing cards.

3 humming beetle.

4 bellowing in the lane.

5 Robert Aiken, one of the poet's Ayrshire friends.

What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
 Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier
 there I ween!

2

November chill blows loud wi' angry sigh; 10
 The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
 The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
 The black'ning trains o' craws to their
 repose:

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes —
 This night his weekly moil is at an end, 15
 Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his
 hoes,
 Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
 And weary, o'er the moor, his course does
 hameward bend.

3

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
 Beneath the shelter of an aged tree; 20
 Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher¹
 through
 To meet their dad, wi' flichterin² noise and
 glee.

His wee bit ingle,³ blinkin bonilie,
 His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wife's
 smile,

The lispin infant, prattling on his knee, 25
 Does a' his weary kiaugh⁴ and care beguile,
 And makes him quite forget his labor and
 his toil.

4

Belyve,⁵ the elder bairns come drapping in,
 At service out, amang the farmers roun';
 Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie⁶
 rin 30

A cannie errand to a neebor town:
 Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman
 grown,
 In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
 Comes hame; perhaps, to shew a braw⁷
 new gown,
 Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee, 35
 To help her parents dear, if they in hardship
 be.

5

With joy unfeigned, brothers and sisters
 meet,
 And each for other's weelfare kindly
 spiers;⁸
 The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed
 fleet;

1 stagger.

2 fluttering.

3 fire.

4 anxiety.

5 by-and-by.

6 watchful.

7 fine.

8 asks.

Each tells the uncos¹ that he sees or
hears. 40
The parents partial eye² their hopeful
years;
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle and her sheers,
Gars³ auld claes look amais⁴ as weel's the
new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due. 45

6

Their master's and their mistress's command
The younk⁵ers a' are warnèd to obey;
And mind their labors wi' an eydent³ hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk⁴ or
play:
"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway, 50
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night;
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the
Lord aright."

7

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door; 55
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her
hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck anxious care, enquires
his name, 61
While Jenny hafflins⁵ is afraid to speak;
Weel-pleased the mother hears, it's nae
wild, worthless rake.

8

With kindly welcome, Jenny brings him
ben; 6
A strappin' youth, he takes the mother's
eye; 65
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill taen;
The father cracks⁷ of horses, pleughs, and
kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi'
joy,
But blate and laithfu',⁸ scarce can weel be-
have;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can
spy 70
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae
grave;
Weel-pleased to think her bairn's respected
like the lave.⁹

1 strange things. 2 makes. 3 diligent.
4 dally. 5 half. 6 in. 7 talks.
8 bashful and sheepish. 9 rest.

9

O happy love! where love like this is found;
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond com-
pare!
I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round, 75
And sage experience bids me this de-
clare: —
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure
spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms, breathe out the tender
tale 80
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the
ev'ning gale."

10

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling,
smooth! 86
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their
child?
Then paints the ruined maid, and their dis-
traction wild? 90

11

But now the supper crowns their simple
board,
The healsome parritch, chief o' Scotia's
food;
The soupe their only hawkie¹ does afford,
That 'yont the hallan² snugly chows her
cood;
The dame brings forth, in complimental
mood, 95
To grace the lad, her weel-hained kebbuck,³
fell; 4
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wife, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond⁵ auld, sin' lint was i'
the bell.

12

The chearf¹u' supper done, wi' serious
face, 100
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride.
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets⁶ wearing thin and bare; 105

1 cow. 2 beyond the partition.
3 well-saved cheese. 4 pungent.
5 twelve-month. 6 gray temples.

Those strains that once did sweet in Zion
glide,
He wales ¹ a portion with judicious care,
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with
solemn air.

13

They chant their artless notes in simple
guise,
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest
aim; ¹¹⁰
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild-warbling measures
rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name;
Or noble *Elgin* beats ² the heaven-ward
flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compared with these, Italian trills are
tame; ¹¹⁵
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they, with our Creator's
praise.

14

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage ¹²⁰
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or, how the royal Bard ³ did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire; ¹²⁵
Or other holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

15

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme:
How guiltless blood for guilty man was
shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second
name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His
head; ¹³⁰
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced
by Heaven's command. ¹³⁵

16

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal
King,
The saint, the father, and the husband
prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant
wing," ⁴

¹ chooses. ² kindles. ³ i.e. David.
⁴ From Pope's *Windsor Forest*.

That thus they all shall meet in future days,
There, ever bask in uncreated rays, ¹⁴⁰
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an
eternal sphere.

17

Compared with this, how poor Religion's
pride, ¹⁴⁵
In all the pomp of method, and of art;
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart,
The Power, incensed, the pageant will
desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole; ¹⁵⁰
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleased, the language of the
soul,
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor
enroll.

18

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest: ¹⁵⁵
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm re-
quest,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous
nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the
best, ¹⁶⁰
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with Grace
Divine preside.

19

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur
springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered
abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of
kings, ¹⁶⁵
"An honest man's the noblest work of
God;" ¹
And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind, ¹⁷⁰
Studied in arts of Hell, in wickedness refined!

20

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is
sent!

¹ From Pope's *Essay on Man*.

Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet
content! 175

And O! may Heaven their simple lives pre-
vent

From Luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be
rent,

A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-
loved Isle. 180

21

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide,
That streamed thro' Wallace's undaunted
heart,

Who dared to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part:
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou
art, 185

His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament and
guard!

1785-6.

TO A MOUSE

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH
THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

I

Wee, sleekit,¹ cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty
Wi' bickering brattle!²

I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee, 5
Wi' murdering pattle!³

2

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle 10
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion
An' fellow mortal!

3

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave⁴ 15

'S a sma' request;

I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,⁵
An' never miss 't!

1 sleek.

2 with hurrying scamper.

3 plow-staff.

4 An occasional ear in a pile of twenty-four sheaves.

5 remainder.

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin! 20
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
Baith snell¹ an' keen!

5

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste, 25
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell. 30

6

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,²
To thole³ the winter's sleety dribble, 35
An' cranreuch⁴ cauld!

7

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,⁵ 40
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promised joy!

8

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e, 45
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH
IN APRIL, 1786

I

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure⁶
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r, 5
Thou bonie gem.

2

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonie lark, companion meet,

1 biting.

3 endure.

2 without house or holding.

4 hoar-frost.

5 askew.

6 dust.

Bending thee 'mang the dewy weat,
 Wi' speckled breast!
 When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
 The purpling east.

3

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
 Upon thy early, humble birth;
 Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
 Amid the storm,
 Scarce reared above the parent-earth
 Thy tender form.

4

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
 High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield:
 But thou, beneath the random bield¹
 O' clod or stane,
 Adorns the histie² stibble-field,
 Unseen, alane.

5

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
 Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
 Thou lifts thy unassuming head
 In humble guise;
 But now the share uptears thy bed,
 And low thou lies!

6

Such is the fate of artless maid,
 Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
 By love's simplicity betrayed,
 And guileless trust;
 Till she, like thee, all soiled, is laid
 Low i' the dust.

7

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
 On Life's rough ocean luckless starred!
 Unskilful he to note the card
 Of prudent lore,
 Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And whelm him o'er!

8

Such fate to suffering Worth is giv'n,
 Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
 By human pride or cunning driv'n
 To mis'ry's brink;
 Till, wrenched of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
 He, ruined, sink!

9

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
 That fate is thine — no distant date;
 Stern Ruin's plough-share drives elate,

¹ shelter.² bare.

Full on thy bloom,
 Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
 Shall be thy doom!

EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD, APRIL 1, 1785

1

While briers an' woodbines budding green,
 And pairtricks¹ sraichin loud at e'en,
 An' morning poussie² whiddin³ seen,
 Inspire my Muse,
 This freedom, in an unknown frien'
 I pray excuse.

2

On Fasten-e'en⁴ we had a rockin,⁵
 To ca' the crack⁶ and weave our stockin;
 And there was muckle fun and jokin,
 Ye need na doubt;
 At length we had a hearty yokin,⁷
 At "sang about."

3

There was ae sang, among the rest,
 Aboon them a' it pleased me best,
 That some kind husband had addrest
 To some sweet wife:
 It thirled⁸ the heart-strings thro' the breast,
 A' to the life.

4

I've scarce heard ough described sae weel,
 What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel;
 Thought I, "Can this be Pope or Steele,
 Or Beattie's wark?"
 They tald me 'twas an odd kind chiel
 About Muirkirk.

5

It pat me fidgin-fain⁹ to hear 't,
 An' sae about him there I spier 't;¹⁰
 Then a' that kent him round declared
 He had ingine;¹¹
 That nane excelled it, few cam near 't,
 It was sae fine:

6

That, set him to a pint of ale,
 An' either douce¹² or merry tale,
 Or rhymes an' songs he'd made himsel,
 Or witty catches,
 'Tween Inverness an' Teviotdale,
 He had few matches.

¹ partridges.² hare.³ scudding.⁴ The eve of Ash Wednesday.⁵ social meeting.⁶ have a chat.⁷ spell.⁸ thrilled.⁹ It made me fidget with eagerness.¹⁰ inquired.¹¹ genius.¹² serious.

7

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,
 Tho' I should pawn my pleugh an' graith,¹
 Or die a cadger pownie's² death,
 At some dyke-back,³ 40
 A pint an' gill I'd gie them baith,
 To hear your crack.⁴

8

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
 Amaist as soon as I could spell,
 I to the crambo-jingle⁵ fell;
 Tho' rude an' rough — 45
 Yet crooning to a body's sel,
 Does weel enOUGH.

9

I am nae poet, in a sense;
 But just a rhymier like by chance, 50
 An' hae to learning nae pretence;
 Yet, what the matter?
 Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
 I jingle at her.

10

Your critic-folk may cock their nose, 55
 And say, "How can you e'er propose,
 You wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
 To mak a sang?"
 But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
 Ye're maybe wrang. 60

11

What's a' your jargon o' your Schools,
 Your Latin names for horns an' stools?
 If honest Nature made you fools,
 What sairs⁶ your grammers?
 Ye'd better taen up spades and shoos, 65
 Or knapping-hammers.

12

A set o' dull, conceited hashes⁷
 Confuse their brains in college-classes,
 They gang in stirks,⁸ and come out asses,
 Plain truth to speak; 70
 An' syne⁹ they think to climb Parnassus
 By dint o' Greek!

13

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
 That's a' the learning I desire;
 Then, tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire 75
 At pleugh or cart,
 My Muse, tho' hamely in attire,
 May touch the heart.

1 tools. 2 hawkers' pony's. 3 back of a fence.
 4 talk. 5 rhyming. 6 serves.
 7 dunderheads. 8 young bullocks. 9 then.

14

O for a spunk o' Allan's¹ glee,
 Or Fergusson's, the bauld an' slee, 80
 Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
 If I can hit it!
 That would be lear² enOUGH for me,
 If I could get it.

15

Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow, 85
 Tho' real friends I b'lieve are few;
 Yet, if your catalogue be fow,³
 I'se no insist:
 But, gif ye want ae friend that's true,
 I'm on your list. 90

16

I winna blaw about mysel,
 As ill I like my fauts to tell;
 But friends, an' folks that wish me well,
 They sometimes roose⁴ me;
 Tho', I maun own, as monie still 95
 As far abuse me.

17

There's ae wee faut they whyles lay to me,
 I like the lasses — Gude forgie me!
 For monie a plack⁵ they wheedle frae me
 At dance or fair; 100
 Maybe some ither thing they gie me,
 They weel can spare.

18

But Mauchline Race or Mauchline Fair,
 I should be proud to meet you there:
 We 'se gie ae night's discharge to care, 105
 If we forgather;
 And hae a swap o' rhymin-ware⁶
 Wi' ane anither.

19

The four-gill chap,⁷ we'se gar⁸ him clatter,
 An' kirsen him wi' reekin water;⁹ 110
 Syne we'll sit down an' tak our whitter,¹⁰
 To cheer our heart;
 An' faith, we'se be acquainted better
 Before we part.

20

Awa ye selfish, warly race, 115
 Wha think that havins,¹¹ sense, an' grace,

1 Allan Ramsay (1686-1758) and Robert Fergusson
 (1750-74), Scotch poets. 3 full. 4 praise.
 2 learning. 5 coin. 6 i.e. exchange poems.
 7 i.e. the light drinker. 8 make.
 9 And christen himself with steaming water.
 10 hearty draught. 11 good manners.

Ev'n love an' friendship should give place
 To Catch-the-Plack!¹
 I dinna like to see your face,
 Nor hear your crack.² 120

21

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
 Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
 Who hold your being on the terms,
 "Each aid the others,"
 Come to my bowl, come to my arms, 125
 My friends, my brothers!

22

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
 As my auld pen's worn to the grissle,
 Twa lines frae you wad gar me fiddle,³
 Who am most fervent, 130
 While I can either sing or whistle,
 Your friend and servant.

1785.

TAM O' SHANTER

A TALE

Of Brownie and of Bogillie full is this Buke.
 GAWIN DOUGLAS.

The ruined church of Alloway stands on the banks of the Doon, about three-quarters of a mile from the poet's birthplace, so that the scene of the story is intimately familiar to Burns and to his friends. The poem, first published in *The Edinburgh Magazine* for March, 1791, is a superb example of that mingling of humor and horror which we call the grotesque, and admirable in the rapid movement and vividness of its narrative.

When chapman billies⁴ leave the street,
 And drouthy⁵ neebors neebors meet;
 As market-days are wearing late,
 An' folk begin to tak the gate;⁶
 While we sit bousing at the nappy,⁷ 5
 An' getting fou and unco⁸ happy,
 We think na' on the lang Scots miles,
 The mosses, waters, slaps,⁹ and styles,
 That lie between us and our hame,
 Where sits our sulky, sullen dame, 10
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
 As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
 (Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses, 15
 For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam, had'st thou but been sae wise,
 As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
 She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,¹
 A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;²
 That frae November till October, 21
 Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
 That ilka melder³ wi' the miller,
 Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
 That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,⁴ 25
 The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
 That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
 She prophesied, that, late or soon,
 Thou woud be found deep drowned in
 Doon, 30
 Or caught wi' warlocks⁵ in the mirk⁹
 By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.

Ah! gentle dames, it gars me greet,⁷
 To think how monie counsels sweet,
 How monie lengthened, sage advices 35
 The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market-night,
 Tam had got planted unco right,
 Fast by an ingle,⁸ bleezing finely,
 Wi' reaming swats,⁹ that drank divinely; 40
 And at his elbow, Souter¹⁰ Johnie,
 His ancient, trusty, drouthy cronie:
 Tam lo'd him like a very brither;
 They had been fou for weeks thegither.
 The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter; 45
 And ay the ale was growing better:
 The landlady and Tam grew gracious
 Wi' secret favors, sweet and precious:
 The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
 The landlord's laugh was ready chorus: 50
 The storm without might rair and rustle,
 Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
 E'en drowned himsel among the nappy.
 As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure, 55
 The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure:
 Kings may be blest but Tam was glorious,
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread:
 You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed; 60
 Or like the snow falls in the river,
 A moment white — then melts for ever;
 Or like the borealis race,
 That flit ere you can point their place;
 Or like the rainbow's lovely form 65
 Evanishing amid the storm.

1 hunt-the-coin. 2 talk.
 3 make me tingle (with delight). 4 pedlar-fellows.
 5 thirsty. 6 go home. 7 ale.
 8 uncommonly. 9 gates.

1 good-for-nothing. 2 babbler. 3 grinding.
 4 That every time a nag was shoed. 5 wizards.
 6 dark. 7 makes me weep.
 8 fireplace. 9 foaming ale. 10 cobbler.

Nae man can tether time or tide;
 The hour approaches Tam maun ride:
 That hour, o' night's black arch the key-
 stane,
 That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in;
 And sic a night he taks the road in, 71
 As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last;
 The rattling showers rose on the blast;
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed;
 Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed:
 That night, a child might understand, 77
 The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare Meg,
 A better never lifted leg, 80
 Tam skelpit¹ on thro' dub² and mire,
 Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
 Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
 Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots
 sonnet,
 Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares, 85
 Lest gowles³ catch him unawares:
 Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
 Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
 Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;⁴ 90
 And past the birks⁵ and meikle stane,
 Whare drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
 And thro' the whins,⁶ and by the cairn,⁷
 Whare hunters fand the murdered bairn;⁸
 And near the thorn, aboon the well, 95
 Whare Mungo's mither hanged hersel.
 Before him Doon pours all his floods;
 The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
 Near and more near the thunders roll: 100
 When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
 Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze,⁹
 Thro' ilka bore¹⁰ the beams were glancing,
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn, 105
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
 Wi' tippenny,¹¹ we fear nae evil;
 Wi' usquabae,¹² we'll face the Devil!
 The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
 Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.¹³ 110
 But Maggie stood, right sair astonished,
 Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
 She ventured forward on the light;
 And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance: 115
 Nae cotillion, brent new¹ frae France,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 A winnock-bunker² in the east,
 There sat Auld Nick, in shape o' beast; 120
 A tousie tyke,³ black, grim, and large,
 To gie them music was his charge:
 He screwed the pipes and gart them skirl,⁴
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.⁵
 Coffins stood round, like open presses, 125
 That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
 And, by some devilish cantraip⁶ sleight,
 Each in its cauld hand held a light:
 By which heroic Tam was able
 To note upon the haly table, 130
 A murderer's bane, in gibbet-airns;⁷
 Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;
 A thief new-cutted frae a rape —
 Wi' his last gasp his gab⁸ did gape;
 Five tomahawks wi' bluid red-crusted; 135
 Five scymitars wi' murder crusted;
 A garter which a babe had strangled;
 A knife a father's throat had mangled —
 Whom his ain son o' life bereft —
 The grey-hairs yet stack to the heft; 140
 Wi' mair of horrible and awefu',
 Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowered, amazed, and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
 The piper loud and louder blew, 145
 The dancers quick and quicker flew,
 They reeled, they set, they crossed, they
 cleekit,⁹
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,¹⁰
 And coost her duddies¹¹ to the wark,
 And linket¹² at it in her sark¹³! 150

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,¹⁴
 A' plump and strapping in their teens!
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie¹⁵ flannen,
 Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen! —
 Thir¹⁶ breeks o' mine, my only pair, 155
 That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
 I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies¹⁷
 For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!

But withered beldams, auld and droll,
 Rigwoodie¹⁸ hags wad spean¹⁹ a foal, 160
 Louping and flinging on a crummock,²⁰
 I wonder did na turn thy stomach!

1 brand-new.	2 window-seat.	3 A shaggy dog.
4 made them squeal.	5 ring.	6 magic.
7 irons.	8 mouth.	9 clutched.
10 Till each old hag sweated and steamed.		
11 threw off her clothes.		12 tripped.
13 shirt.	14 lasses.	15 greasy.
17 buttocks.	18 ancient.	19 wean (by disgust).
20 crooked staff.		

1 hastened.	2 puddle.	3 hobgoblins.
4 smothered.	5 birches.	6 furze.
7 pile of stones.	8 child.	9 blaze.
10 opening.	11 two-penny ale.	12 whiskey.
13 he cared not a farthing for devils.		

But Tam kend what was what fu' braw-
lie:¹

There was ae winsome wench and wawlie,²
That night enlisted in the core,³ 165
Lang after kend on Carrick shore
(For monie a beast to dead she shot,
An' perished monie a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,⁴
And kept the country-side in fear). 170
Her cutty sark,⁵ o' Paisley harn,⁶
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.⁷ . . .
Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie, 175
That sark she coft⁸ for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever graced a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,
Sic flights are far beyond her power: 180
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jad she was and strang),
And how Tam stood like ane bewitched,
And thought his very een enriched;
Even Satan glowered, and fided⁹ fu' fain, 185
And hotched¹⁰ and blew wi' might and main;
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint¹¹ his reason a' thegither,
And roars out: "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark; 190
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,¹²
When plundering herds assail their byke; 13
As open pussie's¹⁴ mortal foes, 195
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud:
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch¹⁵ skriech and hollo. 200

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin! 16
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg, 205
And win the key-stane of the brig;
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross!
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient¹⁷ a tail she had to shake; 210
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,

1 finely. 2 well-built. 3 corps. 4 barley.
5 short skirt. 6 coarse cloth. 7 proud.
8 bought. 9 fidgeted. 10 hitched his arm.
11 lost. 12 fuss. 13 hive. 14 a hare's.
15 unearthly. 16 reward. 17 devil.

And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;¹
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale, 215
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carlin² claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed: 220
When'er to drink you are inclined,
Or cutty sarks run in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear:
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

THE JOLLY BEGGARS

A CANTATA

The Jolly Beggars, fragment though it be, is in some ways Burns's masterpiece. The poet once entered in his commonplace book the observation "that every man, even the worst, has something good about him." In this poem he has taken humanity at its lowest pitch of wretched squalor, and chosen for his setting a disreputable and dirty tavern. His beggars are drunken, lustful vagabonds, to all appearance "down and out." He has concealed nothing, and has made no apologies; but he has found in them a gayety and courage which is not mere bravado. The poem is the triumphant justification of the assertion that "a man's a man for a' that." It was written in 1785, but was not published till after the poet's death.

RECITATIVO

I

When lyart³ leaves bestrow the yird,⁴
Or, wavering like the bauckie-bird,⁵
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;
When hailstones drive wi' bitter skyte,⁶ 5
And infant frosts begin to bite,
In hoary cranreuch⁷ drest;
Ae night at e'en a merry core⁸
O' randie, gangrel bodies⁹
In Poosie-Nansie's held the splore,¹⁰
To drink their orra duddies: 11 10
Wi' quaffing and laughing
They ranted¹² an' they sang,
Wi' jumping an' thumping
The vera girdle rang.

2

First, niest¹³ the fire, in auld red rags 15
Ane sat, weel braced wi' mealy bags

1 aim. 2 witch. 3 faded. 4 earth.
5 bat. 6 spirt. 7 hoar-frost. 8 company.
9 Of lawless vagabonds. 10 carousal.
11 To sell their extra clothes for drink.
12 rollicked. 13 next.

And knapsack a' in order;
 His doxy lay within his arm;
 Wi' usquebae ¹ an' blankets warm,
 She blinket ² on her sodger. 20
 An' ay he gies the tozie ³ drab
 The tither skelpin ⁴ kiss,
 While she held up her greedy gab ⁵
 Just like an aumous dish; ⁶
 Ilk smack still did crack still 25
 Like onie cadger's ⁷ whup;
 Then, swaggering an' staggering,
 He roared this ditty up: —

AIR

TUNE: *Soldiers Joy*

I

I am a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
 And show my cuts and scars wherever I come: 30
 This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench
 When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.

Lal de daudle, etc.

2

My prenticeship I past, where my leader
 breathed his last,
 When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abrám; ⁸ 35
 And I servèd out my trade when the gallant game was played,
 And the Moro ⁹ low was laid at the sound of the drum.

3

I lastly was with Curtis among the floating batt'ries, ¹⁰
 And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
 Yet let my country need me, with Eliott ¹¹ to head me 40
 I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of the drum.

4

And now, tho' I must beg with a wooden arm and leg
 And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,

1 whiskey. 2 smirked. 3 tipsy.
 4 smacking. 5 mouth. 6 alms basin.
 7 hawker's. 8 i.e. at Quebec (1759).
 9 The fortress at Santiago de Cuba, stormed by the British in 1762.
 10 At Gibraltar (1782).
 11 The heroic defender of Gibraltar (1779-82).

I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle, and my callet 44
 As when I used in scarlet to follow a drum.

5

What tho' with hoary locks I must stand the winter shocks,
 Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a home?
 When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
 I could meet a troop of Hell at the sound of a drum. 49

Lal de daudle, etc.

RECITATIVO

He ended; and the kebars ¹ sheuk
 Aboon the chorus roar;
 While frighted rattons backward leuk,
 An' seek the benmost bore: ²
 A fairy fiddler frae the neuk, ³ 55
 He skirled ⁴ out *Encore!*
 But up arose the martial chuck,
 An' laid the loud uproar: —

AIR

TUNE: *Sodger Laddie*

I

I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
 And still my delight is in proper young men.
 Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie: 61
 No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie!
 Sing, lal de dal, etc.

2

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade:
 To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
 His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy, 66
 Transported I was with my sodger laddie.

3

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch;
 The sword I forsook for the sake of the church;
 He riskèd the soul, and I ventured the body:
 'Twas then I proved false to my sodger laddie. 71

4

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot;
 The regiment at large for a husband I got;

1 rafters. 2 the inmost hole.
 3 corner. 4 screamed.

From the gilded spontoon¹ to the fife I was ready:

I askèd no more but a sodger laddie. 75

5

But the Peace it reduced me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy in a Cunningham Fair;
His rags regimental they fluttered so gaudy:
My heart it rejoiced at a sodger laddie.

6

And now I have lived — I know not how long!
But still I can join in a cup and a song; 81
And whilst with both hands I can hold the
glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie!
Sing, *lal de Jal*, etc.

RECITATIVO

Poor Merry-Andrew² in the neuk 85
Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler-hizzie;³
They mind 't na wha the chorus teuk,
Between themselves they were sae busy,
At length, wi' drink an' courting dizzy,
He stoitered⁴ up an' made a face; 90
Then turned an' laid a smack on Grizzie,
Syne⁵ tuned his pipes wi' grave grimace: —

AIR

TUNE: *Auld Sir Symon*

1

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou;⁶
Sir Knave is a fool in a session:
He's there but a prentice I trow, 95
But I am a fool by profession.

2

My grannie she bought me a beuk,
An' I held awa to the school:
I fear I my talent misteuk, 100
But what will ye hae of a fool?

3

For drink I wad venture my neck;
A hizzie's the half of my craft:
But what could ye other expect
Of ane that's avowedly daft?

4

I ance was tyed up like a stirk⁷ 105
For civilly swearing and quaffing;
I ance was abused i' the kirk
For towsing a lass i' my daffin.⁸

¹ short pike (carried by infantry officers).
² acrobat and clown. ³ tinkler-wench.
⁴ staggered. ⁵ then. ⁶ full.
⁷ young bullock. ⁸ sky-larking.

5

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport
Let naeboddy name wi' a jeer: 110
There's even, I'm tauld, i' the Court
A tumbler ca'd the Premier.

6

Observed ye yon reverend lad
Mak faces to tickle the mob?
He rails at our mountebank squad — 115
It's rivalryship just i' the job!

7

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
For faith! I'm confoundedly dry:
The chiel that's a fool for himsel,
Guid Lord! he's far dafter than I. 120

RECITATIVO

Then niest outspak a raucle¹ carlin,²
Wha kent fu' weel to cleek the sterlin,³
For monie a pursie she had hookèd,
An' had in monie a well been douked.
Her love had been a Highland laddie, 125
But weary fa' the waefu' woodie!⁴
Wi' sighs an' sobs she thus began
To wail her braw⁵ John Highlandman: —

AIR

TUNE: *O An' Ye Were Dead, Guidman*

1

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lalland⁶ laws he held in scorn, 130
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS

Sing hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan' 135
Was match for my John Highlandman!

2

With his philibeg,⁷ an' tartan plaid,
An' guid claymore⁸ down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman. 140

3

We rangèd a' from Tweed to Spey,
An' lived like lords an' ladies gay,
For a Lalland face he fearèd none,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

¹ sturdy. ² old woman.
³ Who knew full well how to snatch money.
⁴ But bad luck to the woful gallows!
⁵ gayly dressed. ⁶ Lowland.
⁷ kilt. ⁸ sword.

4

They banished him beyond the sea, 145
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.

5

But, Och! they caught him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast. 150
My curse upon them every one —
They've hanged my braw John Highland-
man!

6

And now a widow I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return;
No comfort but a hearty can 155
When I think on John Highlandman.

CHORUS

Sing hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman! 160

RECITATIVO

I

A pigmy scraper on a fiddle,
Wha used to trytes¹ an' fairs to driddle,²
Her strappin limb an' gawsie³ middle
(He reached nae higher)
Had holed his heartie like a riddle,⁴ 165
An' blawn 't on fire.

2

Wi' hand on hainch⁵ and upward e'e,
He crooned his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an *arioso* key
The wee Apollo 170
Set off wi' *allegretto* glee
His *giga* solo: —

AIR

TUNE: *Whistle Owre the Lave O't*

I

Let me ryke⁶ up to dight⁷ that tear;
An' go wi' me an' be my dear,
An' then your every care an' fear 175
May whistle owre the lave⁸ o't.

CHORUS

I am a fiddler to my trade,
An' a' the tunes that e'er I played,
The sweetest still to wife or maid
Was *Whistle Owre the Lave O't*. 180

1 cattle-markets. 2 toddle. 3 buxom. 4 sieve.
5 haunch. 6 reach. 7 wipe. 8 rest.

2

At kirns¹ an' weddins we'se be there,
An' O, sae nicely 's we will fare!
We'll bowse about till Daddie Care
Sing *Whistle Owre the Lave O't*.

3

Sae merrily the banes we'll pyke,² 185
An' sun oursels about the dyke;
An' at our leisure, when ye like,
We'll — whistle owre the lave o't!

4

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
An' while I kittle hair on thairms,³ 190
Hunger, cauld, an' a' sic harms
May whistle owre the lave o't.

CHORUS

I am a fiddler to my trade,
An' a' the tunes that e'er I played,
The sweetest still to wife or maid 195
Was *Whistle Owre the Lave O't*.

RECITATIVO

I

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird⁴
As weel as poor gut-scraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
An' draws a roosty rapier; 200
He swoor by a' was swearing worth
To speet⁵ him like a pliver,⁶
Unless he would from that time forth
Relinquish her for ever.

2

Wi' ghastly e'e poor Tweedle-Dee 205
Upon his hunkers⁷ bended,
An' prayed for grace wi' ruefu' face,
An' sae the quarrel ended.
But tho' his little heart did grieve
When round the tinkler prest her, 210
He feigned to snirtle⁸ in his sleeve
When thus the caird addressed her: —

AIR

TUNE: *Clout the Cauldron*

I

My bonie lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station;
I've travelled round all Christian ground 215
In this my occupation;

1 harvest-homes. 2 pick.
3 tickle the hair (of my bow) on the catgut.
4 tinkler. 5 run through. 6 plover.
7 buttocks. 8 sniggle.

I've taen the gold, an' been enrolled
 In many a noble squadron;
 But vain they searched when off I marched
 To go an' clout ² the cauldron. 220

2

Despise that shrimp, that withered imp,
 With a' his noise an' cap'rin,
 An' take a share wi' those that bear
 The budget ² and the apron!
 And by that stowp, ³ my faith an' houe! 225
 And by that dear Kilbaigie! ⁴
 If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
 May I ne'er weat my craigie! ⁵

RECITATIVO

I

The caird prevailed: th' unblushing fair
 In his embraces sunk, 230
 Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
 An' partly she was drunk.
 Sir Violino, with an air
 That showed a man o' spunk,
 Wished unison between the pair, 235
 An' made the bottle clunk ⁶
 To their health that night.

2

But hurchin ⁷ Cupid shot a shaft,
 That played a dame a shavie: ⁸
 The fiddler raked her fore and aft 240
 Behint the chicken cavie; ⁹
 Her lord, a wight of Homer's craft, ¹⁰
 Tho' limpin' wi' the spavie, ¹¹
 He hirpled ¹² up, an' lap like daft,
 An' shored ¹³ them "Dainty Davie" 245
 O' boot ¹⁴ that night.

3

He was a care-defying blade
 As ever Bacchus listed!
 Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,
 His heart, she ever missed it. 250
 He had no wish but — to be glad,
 Nor want but — when he thristed,
 He hated nought but — to be sad;
 An' thus the Muse suggested
 His sang that night. 255

AIR

TUNE: *For A' That, An' A' That*

I

I am a Bard, of no regard
 Wi' gentle folks an' a' that,

1 patch. 2 tinker's bag of tools. 3 drinking cup.
 4 A brand of whiskey. 5 throat. 6 gurgle.
 7 urchin. 8 trick. 9 chicken-coop. 10
 10 i.e., a ballad-singer. 11 spavin.
 12 hobbled. 13 offered. 14 gratis.

But Homer-like the glowrin byke, ¹
 Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS

For a' that, an' a' that, 260
 An' twice as muckle 's a' that,
 I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
 I've wife enugh for a' that.

2

I never drank the Muses' stank, ²
 Castalia's burn, ³ an' a' that; 265
 But there it streams, an' richly reams ⁴ —
 My Helicon I ca' that.

3

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
 Their humble slave an' a' that;
 But lordly will, I hold it still 270
 A mortal sin to thraw ⁵ that.

4

In raptures sweet this hour we meet
 Wi' mutual love an' a' that;
 But for how lang the flie may stang,
 Let inclination law ⁶ that! 275

5

Their tricks an' craft hae put me daft,
 They've taen me in, an' a' that;
 But clear your decks, an' here's the Sex!
 I like the jads for a' that.

CHORUS

For a' that, an' a' that, 280
 An' twice as muckle 's a' that,
 My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
 They're welcome till 't for a' that!

RECITATIVO

So sung the Bard, and Nansie's wa's
 Shook with a thunder of applause, 285
 Re-echoed from each mouth!
 They toom'd their pocks, ⁷ they pawn'd their
 duds,
 They scarcely left to coor their fuds, ⁸
 To quench their lowin drouth. ⁹ 290
 Then owre again the jovial thrang
 The Poet did request
 To lowse his pack, an' wale ¹⁰ a sang,
 A ballad o' the best:
 He rising, rejoicing
 Between his twa Deborahs, 295
 Looks round him, an' found them
 Impatient for the chorus: —

1 the staring crowd. 2 pool. 3 brook.
 4 foams. 5 thwart. 6 decide.
 7 emptied their wallets. 8 cover their tails.
 9 burning thirst. 10 choose.

AIR

TUNE: *Jolly Mortals, Fill Your Glasses*

1

See the smoking bowl before us!
 Mark our jovial, ragged ring!
 Round and round take up the chorus, 300
 And in raptures let us sing:

CHORUS

A fig for those by law protected!
 Liberty's a glorious feast,
 Courts for cowards were erected,
 Churches built to please the priest! 305

2

What is title, what is treasure,
 What is reputation's care?
 If we lead a life of pleasure,
 'Tis no matter how or where!

3

With the ready trick and fable 310
 Round we wander all the day;
 And at night in barn or stable
 Hug our doxies on the hay.

4

Does the train-attended carriage
 Thro' the country lighter rove? 315
 Does the sober bed of marriage
 Witness brighter scenes of love?

5

Life is all a variorum,
 We regard not how it goes;
 Let them prate about decorum, 320
 Who have character to lose.

6

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
 Here's to all the wandering train!
 Here's our ragged brats and callets! 325
 One and all, cry out, Amen!

CHORUS

A fig for those by law protected!
 Liberty's a glorious feast,
 Courts for cowards were erected,
 Churches built to please the priest!

MY NANIE, O

1

Behind yon hills where Lugar flows
 'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,

1 wench.

The wintry sun the day has closed,
 And I'll awa to Nanie, O.

2

The westlin wind blows loud an' shill,¹ 5
 The night's baith mirk² and rainy, O;
 But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
 An' owre the hill to Nanie, O.

3

My Nanie's charming, sweet, an' young;
 Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O; 10
 May ill befa' the flattering tongue
 That wad beguile my Nanie, O!

4

Her face is fair, her heart is true;
 As spotless as she's bonie, O,
 The op'ning gowan,³ wat wi' dew, 15
 Nae purer is than Nanie, O.

5

A country lad is my degree, 20
 An' few there be that ken me, O;
 But what care I how few they be?
 I'm welcome ay to Nanie, O.

6

My riches a's my penny-fee,⁴
 An' I maun guide it cannie,⁵ O;
 But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
 My thoughts are a' — my Nanie, O.

7

Our auld guidman⁶ delights to view 25
 His sheep an' kye thrive bonie, O;
 But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,
 An' has nae care but Nanie, O.

8

Come weel, come woe, I care na by;
 I'll tak what Heav'n will send me, O: 30
 Nae ither care in life have I,
 But live, an' love my Nanie, O.

1784.

GREEN GROW THE RASHES, O

CHORUS

Green grow the rashes,⁷ O;
 Green grow the rashes, O;
 The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
 Are spent among the lasses, O.

1 shrill.

5 carefully.

2 dark.

6 husbandman.

3 daisy.

4 wages.

7 rushes.

1
There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In every hour that passes, O;
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere nae for the lasses, O.

2
The war'ly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

3
But gie me a cannie¹ hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O,
An' war'ly cares an' war'ly men
May a' gae tapsalteerie,² O!

4
For you sae douce,³ ye sneer at this;
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O;
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,⁴
He dearly loved the lasses, O.

5
Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O;
Her prentice han' she tried on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.

CHORUS

Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent among the lasses, O.
1786.

WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES,
MY MARY

1
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across th' Atlantic roar?

2
O, sweet grows the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

3
I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true, 10

1 quiet.
3 sedate.

2 topsy-turvy.
4 i.e. Solomon.

And sae may the Heavens forget me,
When I forget my vow!

4
O, plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily-white hand!
O, plight me your faith, my Mary,
Before I leave Scotia's strand! 15

5
We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us!
The hour and the moment o' time! 20
1786.

THE SILVER TASSIE

1
Go, fetch to me a pint o' wine,
And fill it in a silver tassie,¹
That I may drink before I go
A service to my bonie lassie!
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith, 5
Fu' loud the wind blows frae the Ferry,
The ship rides by the Berwick-Law,
And I maun leave my bonie Mary.

2
The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are rank'd ready, 10
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes deep and bloody.
It's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad mak me langer wish to tarry,
Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar: 15
It's leaving thee, my bonie Mary!
1788.

OF A' THE AIRTS

1
Of a' the airts² the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best.
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,³ 5
And monie a hill between,
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

2
I see her in the dewy flowers —
I see her sweet and fair. 10
I hear her in the tunefu' birds —
I hear her charm the air.

1 cup. 2 directions. 3 roll.

There's not a bonie flower that springs
 By fountain, shaw,¹ or green,
 There's not a bonie bird that sings, 15
 But minds me o' my Jean.

1788? Published 1790.

AULD LANG SYNE

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear,
 For auld lang syne,
 We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
 For auld lang syne!

I

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, 5
 And never brought to mind?
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
 And auld lang syne!

2

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,²
 And surely I'll be mine,
 And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
 For auld lang syne!

3

We twa hae run about the braes,³
 And pou'd the gowans⁴ fine,
 But we've wandered monie a weary fit⁵ 15
 Sin' auld lang syne.

4

We twa hae paidld in the burn⁶
 Frae morning sun till dine,
 But seas between us braid hae roared
 Sin' auld lang syne. 20

5

And there's a hand, my trusty fere,⁷
 And gie's a hand o' thine,
 And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught⁸
 For auld lang syne!

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear, 25
 For auld lang syne,
 We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
 For auld lang syne!

1788.

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO

I

John Anderson my jo,⁹ John,
 When we were first acquent,

1 wood. 2 pint-cup. 3 hillsides.
 4 picked the daisies. 5 foot. 6 brook.
 7 comrade. 8 draught of good will. 9 sweetheart.

Your locks were like the raven,
 Your bonie brow was brent;¹
 But now your brow is beld,² John, 5
 Your locks are like the snaw,
 But blessings on your frosty pow,³
 John Anderson my jo!

2

John Anderson my jo, John,
 We clamb the hill thegither, 10
 And monie a cantie⁴ day, John,
 We've had wi' ane anither:
 Now we maun totter down, John,
 And hand in hand we'll go,
 And sleep thegither at the foot, 15
 John Anderson my jo!

Published 1790.

TAM GLEN

I

My heart is a-breaking, dear tittie,⁵
 Some counsel unto me come len'.
 To anger them a' is a pity,
 But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

2

I'm thinking, wi' sic a braw⁶ fellow 5
 In poortith⁷ I might mak a fen'.⁸
 What care I in riches to wallow,
 If I mauna marry Tam Glen?

3

There's Lowrie the laird o' Dumeller:
 "Guid day to you," brute! he comes
 ben.⁹ 10
 He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
 But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

4

My minnie¹⁰ does constantly deave¹¹ me,
 And bids me beware o' young men.
 They flatter, she says, to deceive me — 15
 But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

5

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,
 He'd gie me guid hunder marks ten.
 But if it's ordained I maun take him,
 O, wha will I get but Tam Glen? 20

6

Yestreen at the valentines' dealing,
 My heart to my mou gied a sten,¹²

1 straight. 2 bald. 3 head. 4 cheerful.
 5 sister. 6 fine. 7 poverty. 8 shift.
 9 in. 10 mother. 11 deafen. 12 gave a leap.

For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written "Tam Glen!"

7

The last Halloween I was waukin' ²⁵
My droukit sark-sleeve,² as ye ken —
His likeness came up the house staukin,³
And the very grey breeks ⁴ o' Tam Glen!

8

Come, counsel, dear tittie, don't tarry!
I'll gie ye my bonie black hen, ³⁰
Gif ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

Published 1790.

WILLIE BREWED A PECK O' MAUT

CHORUS

We are na fou,⁵ we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e!
The cock may crawl, the day may daw,
And ay we'll taste the barley-bree!

1

O, Willie brewed a peck o' maut, ⁵
And Rob and Allan cam to see.
Three blyther hearts that lee-lang ⁶ night
Ye wad na found in Christendie.

2

Here are we met three merry boys,
Three merry boys I trow are we; ¹⁰
And monie a night we've merry been,
And monie mae ⁷ we hope to be!

3

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin in the lift ⁸ sae hie:
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame, ¹⁵
But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!

4

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
He is the King amang us three! ²⁰

CHORUS

We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e!

1 watching. 2 my drenched shirt-sleeve.
3 stalking. 4 breeches. 5 full.
6 live-long. 7 more. 8 sky.

The cock may crawl, the day may daw,
And ay we'll taste the barley-bree!

1789.

AE FOND KISS

1

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae farewell, and then forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee. ⁵
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,
Dark despair around benights me.

2

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy:
Naething could resist my Nancy! ¹⁰
But to see her was to love her,
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met — or never parted — ¹⁵
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

3

Fare-the-weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare-the-weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka ¹ joy and treasure,
Peace, Enjoyment, Love and Pleasure! ²⁰
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

Published 1792.

SWEET AFTON

1

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green
braes! ²
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy
praise!
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring
stream —
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
dream!

2

Thou stock dove whose echo resounds thro'
the glen, ⁵
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny
den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming
forbear —
I charge you, disturb not my slumbering fair!
1 each. 2 hillsides.

3

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighboring
hills,
Far marked with the courses of clear, winding
rills!
There daily I wander, as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my
eye.

4

How pleasant thy banks and green vallies
below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses
blossom!
There oft, as mild Ev'ning weeps over the
lea,
The sweet-scented birk¹ shades my Mary
and me.

5

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it
glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary
resides!
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As, gathering sweet flowerets, she stems thy
clear wave!

6

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green
braes!
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my
lays!
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring
stream —
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
dream!

1789.

YE FLOWERY BANKS

1

Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I-sae fu' o' care?

2

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird, s
That sings upon the bough:
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause Luve was true!

3

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate: 10
1 birch.

For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate!

4

Aft hae I roved by bonie Doon
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka¹ bird sang o' its luve, 15
And sae did I o' mine.

5

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae aff its thorny tree,
And my fause luvver staw my rose,
But left the thorn wi' me. 20

1791?

A RED, RED ROSE

1

O, my luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
O, my luve is like the melodie,
That's sweetly played in tune.

2

As fair art thou, my bonie lass, 5
So deep in luve am I,
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

3

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun! 10
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

4

And fare thee weel, my only luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve, 15
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

Published 1796.

LAST MAY A BRAW WOOPER

1

Last May a braw wooper cam down the lang
glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave² me.
I said there was naething I hated like men:
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me, be-
lieve me —
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me! 5

2

He spak o' the darts in my bonie black een,
And vowed for my love he was diein.
1 each. 2 deafen.

I said, he might die when he liket for Jean:
 The Lord forgie me for liein, for liein —
 The Lord forgie me for liein! 10

3
 A weel-stocket mailen,¹ himself for the laird,
 And marriage aff-hand were his proffers:
 I never loot on that I kenned it, or cared,
 But thought I might hae waur offers, waur
 offers —
 But thought I might hae waur offers. 15

4
 But what wad ye think? In a fortnight or
 less
 (The Deil tak his taste to gae near her!)
 He up the Gate-Slack to my black cousin,
 Bess!
 Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her,
 could bear her —
 Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her. 20

5
 But a' the niest week, as I petted ² wi' care,
 I gaed to the tryste ³ o' Dalgarnock,
 And wha but my fine fickle lover was there?
 I glowered as I'd seen a warlock,⁴ a war-
 lock —
 I glowered as I'd seen a warlock. 25

6
 But owre my left shouter I gae him a blink,
 Lest neebors might say I was saucy.
 My wooer he capered as he'd been in drink,
 And vowed I was his dear lassie, dear
 lassie —
 And vowed I was his dear lassie! 30

7
 I spiered ⁵ for my cousin fu' couthy ⁶ and
 sweet:
 Gin she had recovered her hearin?
 And how her new shoon fit her auld, shachled ⁷
 feet?
 But heavens! how he fell a swearin, a
 swearin —
 But heavens! how he fell a swearin! 35

8
 He beggèd for gude sake, I wad be his wife,
 Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow;
 So e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
 I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-
 morrow —
 I think I maun wed him to-morrow! 40

Published 1799.

1 farm. 2 sulked. 3 fair. 4 wizard.
 5 asked. 6 kind. 7 shapeless.

SCOTS, WHA HAE

I
 Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
 Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
 Welcome to your gory bed
 Or to victorie!

2
 Now's the day, and now's the hour: 5
 See the front o' battle lour,
 See approach proud Edward's power —
 Chains and slavery!

3
 Wha will be a traitor knave?
 Wha can fill a coward's grave? 10
 Wha sae base as be a slave? —
 Let him turn, and flee!

4
 Wha for Scotland's King and Law
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
 Freeman stand or freeman fa', 15
 Let him follow me!

5
 By Oppression's woes and pains,
 By your sons in servile chains,
 We will drain our dearest veins
 But they shall be free! 20

6
 Lay the proud usurpers low!
 Tyrants fall in every foe!
 Liberty's in every blow!
 Let us do, or die!

1794.

HIGHLAND MARY

I
 Ye banks and braes ¹ and streams around
 The castle o' Montgomery,
 Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
 Your waters never drumlie! ²
 There Summer first unfald her robes, 5
 And there the longest tarry!
 For there I took the last fareweel
 O' my sweet Highland Mary!

2
 How sweetly bloomed the gay, green birk,³
 How rich the hawthorn's blossom, 10
 As underneath their fragrant shade
 I clasped her to my bosom!

1 hillsides. 2 muddy. 3 birch.

The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie:
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

3

Wi' monie a vow and locked embrace
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder.
But O, fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

4

O, pale, pale now, those rosy lips
I aft hae kissed sae fondly;
And closed for ay, the sparkling glance
That dwalt on me sae kindly;
And moulderin' now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

1792.

IS THERE FOR HONEST POVERTY

1

Is there for honest poverty
That tings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by —
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd¹ for a' that.

2

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin² grey, an' a' that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine —
A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that,
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

3

Ye see yon birkie³ ca'd "a lord,"
Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that?
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a cuif⁴ for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
His ribband, star, an' a' that,

1 gold.

2 homespun.

3 fellow.

4 ninny.

The man o' independent mind,
He looks an' laughs at a' that.

15

4

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that!
But an honest man's aboon his might —
Guid faith, he mauna fa' a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense an' pride o' worth
Are higher rank than a' that.

25

30

5

Then let us pray that come it may
(As come it will for a' that)
That Sense and Worth o'er a' the earth
Shall bear the gree² an' a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's comin yet for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that.

1795.

40

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST

1

O, wert thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,³
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did Misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield⁴ should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

5

5

2

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a Paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch of the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

15

1796.

MARY MORISON

1

O Mary, at thy window be!
It is the wished, the trysted hour.
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor.

1 claim.

2 have the first place.

3 direction of the wind.

4 shelter.

How blythely wad I bide the stoure,¹ 5
 A weary slave frae sun to sun,
 Could I the rich reward secure —
 The lovely Mary Morison!

I sighed and said amang them a': — 15
 "Ye are na Mary Morison!"

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
 The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha', 10
 To thee my fancy took its wing,
 I sat, but neither heard or saw:
 Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
 And yon the toast of a' the town,

3
 O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
 Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
 Or canst thou break that heart of his
 Whase only faut is loving thee? 20
 If love for love thou wilt na gie,
 At least be pity to me shown:
 A thought ungentle canna be
 The thought o' Mary Morison.

1 conflict.

Pub. 1800.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

William Blake was born in London in 1757. He was a painter and an engraver as well as a poet, often combining all his arts in the production of a piece. Nearly all his books, in fact, were published by Blake himself. He engraved the poem upon a plate, with the illustration or design to fit it; and his devoted wife bound the printed sheets into a book. His best lyrics appeared in *Poetical Sketches* (1783), *Songs of Innocence* (1789), and *Songs of Experience* (1794). In addition to his poems, he composed a large number of "prophetic books," weird in their fantasy, obscure, and difficult. Among his drawings, his illustrations for the Book of Job are considered the best. He died in 1827.

Blake is one of the most baffling figures in English literature. His eccentric but powerful imagination produced the confusing "prophetic books"; yet it produced, also, the perfect lyrics in *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. All that he did, in literature and in drawing, was stamped by originality. If there is a clue or key to his later compositions, it is his mysticism. The mystic believes that he can free himself of the physical world, and, transcending things material, come directly in touch with the infinite, or ultimate truth. Blake often had moments of ecstasy, during which he saw visions and wrote as under a spell. As a man, he was simple and devout, living an isolated but contented life, happy in his home associations and in his work.

A good collection of his poems is the edition prepared, with a memoir, by William Michael Rossetti (Bell). Among numerous biographies may be mentioned those by Chesterton, Gilchrist, Swinburne, and Symons. James Thomson (B.V.) has an essay on Blake's poetical method in *Biographical and Critical Studies*. Among recent studies, most useful are S. Foster Damon's, and the critical edition of the prophetic writings by D. J. Sloss and J. P. R. Wallis (Oxford).

SONG

My silks and fine array,
 My smiles and languished air,
 By love are driv'n away;
 And mournful lean Despair
 Brings me yew to deck my grave: 5
 Such end true lovers have.

His face is fair as heaven,
 When springing buds unfold;
 O why to him was't given
 Whose heart is wintry cold? 10
 His breast is love's all-worshiped
 tomb,
 Where all love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an axe and spade,
 Bring me a winding-sheet;

When I my grave have made 15
 Let winds and tempests beat:
 Then down I'll lie as cold as clay.
 True love doth pass away!

Pub. 1783.

MAD SONG

The wild winds weep,
 And the night is a-cold;
 Come hither, Sleep,
 And my griefs unfold:
 But lo! the morning peeps 5
 Over the eastern steeps,
 And the rustling beds of dawn
 The earth do scorn.

Lo! to the vault
 Of pavèd heaven, 10

With sorrow fraught,
 My notes are driven:
 They strike the ear of night,
 Make weep the eyes of day;
 They make mad the roaring winds, 15
 And with tempests play.

Like a fiend in a cloud,
 With howling woe
 After night I do crowd,
 And with night will go; 20
 I turn my back to the east
 From whence comforts have increased;
 For light doth seize my brain
 With frantic pain.

Pub. 1783.

SONG

How sweet I roamed from field to field,
 And tasted all the summer's pride;
 Till I the Prince of Love beheld,
 Who in the sunny beams did glide.

He showed me lilies for my hair, 5
 And blushing roses for my brow;
 And led me through his gardens fair,
 Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May-dews my wings were wet,
 And Phœbus fired my vocal rage; 10
 He caught me in his silken net,
 And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
 Then laughing sports and plays with me;
 Then stretches out my golden wing, 15
 And mocks my loss of liberty.

Pub. 1783.

TO THE MUSES

Whether on Ida's shady brow,
 Or in the chambers of the East,
 The chambers of the sun, that now
 From ancient melody have ceased;

Whether in Heaven ye wander fair, 5
 Or the green corners of the earth,
 Or the blue regions of the air
 Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
 Beneath the bosom of the sea, 10
 Wandering in many a coral grove,
 Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry!

How have you left the ancient love
 That bards of old enjoyed in you!
 The languid strings do scarcely move! 15
 The sound is forced, the notes are few!

Pub. 1783.

INTRODUCTION to SONGS OF INNOCENCE

Piping down the valleys wild,
 Piping songs of pleasant glee,
 On a cloud I saw a child,
 And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!" 5
 So I piped with merry cheer.
 "Piper, pipe that song again;"
 So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
 Sing thy songs of happy cheer!" 10
 So I sang the same again,
 While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
 In a book, that all may read." 15
 So he vanished from my sight,
 And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
 And I stained the water clear,
 And I wrote my happy songs
 Every child may joy to hear. 20

Pub. 1789.

THE LAMB

Little Lamb, who made thee?
 Dost thou know who made thee?
 Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,
 By the stream and o'er the mead;
 Gave thee clothing of delight, 5
 Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
 Gave thee such a tender voice,
 Making all the vales rejoice?
 Little Lamb, who made thee?
 Dost thou know who made thee? 10

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
 Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
 He is called by thy name,
 For He calls Himself a Lamb,
 He is meek, and He is mild; 15
 He became a little child.
 I a child, and thou a lamb,
 We are called by His name.
 Little Lamb, God bless thee!
 Little Lamb, God bless thee! 20

Pub. 1789.

INFANT JOY

"I have no name;
I am but two days old."
— What shall I call thee?
"I happy am;
Joy is my name."
— Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy, but two days old;
Sweet joy I call thee:
Thou dost smile:
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pub. 1789.

THE LITTLE BLACK BOY

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O my soul is
white!

White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree, ⁵
And, sitting down before the heat of
day,
She took me on her lap and kissèd me,
And, pointing to the east, began to say:

"Look on the rising sun; — there God does
live,
And gives his light, and gives his heat
away; ¹⁰
And flowers and trees and beasts and men re-
ceive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noon-
day.

"And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of
love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt
face ¹⁵
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learned the heat to
bear,
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear his
voice,
Saying: 'Come out from the grove, my love
and care,
And round my golden tent like lambs re-
joice.'"
²⁰

Thus did my mother say, and kissèd me;
And thus I say to little English boy.

When I from black, and he from white cloud
free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we
joy,

I'll shade him from the heat, till he can
bear ²⁵
To lean in joy upon our father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver
hair,
And be like him, and he will then love
me.
Pub. 1789.

A CRADLE SONG

Sweet dreams, form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head!
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams!

Sweet sleep, with soft down ⁵
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep, Angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child!

Sweet smiles, in the night ¹⁰
Hover over my delight;
Sweet smiles, mother's smile,
All the livelong night beguile.

Sweet moans, dovelike sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
Sweet moans, sweeter smile, ¹⁵
All the dovelike moans beguile.

Sleep, sleep, happy child,
All creation slept and smiled;
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep, ²⁰
While o'er thee thy mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy Maker lay and wept for me:

Wept for me, for thee, for all, ²⁵
When He was an infant small.
Thou His image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee!

Smiles on thee, on me, on all; ³⁰
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are His own smiles;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.

Pub. 1789.

CRADLE SONG

FROM SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

Sleep! sleep! beauty bright,
 Dreaming o'er the joys of night;
 Sleep! sleep! in thy sleep
 Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face 5
 Soft desires I can trace,
 Secret joys and secret smiles,
 Little pretty infant wiles.

As thy softest limbs I feel, 10
 Smiles as of the morning steal
 O'er thy cheek, and o'er thy breast
 Where thy little heart does rest.

O, the cunning wiles that creep
 In thy little heart asleep!
 When thy little heart does wake, 15
 Then the dreadful light shall break.

Pub. 1794.

THE TIGER

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies 5
 Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
 On what wings dare he aspire?
 What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art, 10
 Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
 And when thy heart began to beat,
 What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
 In what furnace was thy brain?
 What the anvil? what dread grasp 15
 Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
 And watered heaven with their tears,
 Did he smile his work to see? 19
 Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Pub. 1794.

THE CLOD AND THE PEBBLE

"Love seeketh not itself to please,
 Nor for itself hath any care,
 But for another gives its ease,
 And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair."

So sung a little clod of clay, 5
 Trodden with the cattle's feet,
 But a pebble of the brook
 Warbled out these meters meet:

"Love seeketh only Self to please,
 To bind another to its delight, 10
 Joys in another's loss of ease,
 And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite."

Pub. 1794.

A LITTLE BOY LOST

"Nought loves another as itself,
 Nor venerates another so,
 Nor is it possible to thought
 A greater than itself to know:

"And, Father, how can I love you 5
 Or any of my brothers more?
 I love you like the little bird
 That picks up crumbs around the door."

The Priest sat by and heard the child,
 In trembling zeal he seized his hair: 10
 He led him by his little coat,
 And all admired the priestly care.

And standing on the altar high,
 "Lo! what a fiend is here," said he,
 "One who sets reason up for judge 15
 Of our most holy mystery."

The weeping child could not be heard,
 The weeping parents wept in vain;
 They stripped him to his little shirt,
 And bound him in an iron chain; 20

And burned him in a holy place,
 Where many had been burned before.
 The weeping parents wept in vain.
 Are such things done on Albion's¹ shore?

Pub. 1794.

NIGHT

The sun descending in the west,
 The evening star does shine;
 The birds are silent in their nest,
 And I must seek for mine.

¹ England's.

The moon, like a flower . 5
 In heaven's high bower,
 With silent delight
 Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
 Where flocks have ta'en delight; 10
 Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
 The feet of angels bright:
 Unseen they pour blessing,
 And joy without ceasing,
 On each bud and blossom, 15
 On each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest,
 Where birds are covered warm;
 They visit caves of every beast,
 To keep them all from harm. 20
 If they see any weeping
 That should have been sleeping,
 They pour sleep on their head,
 And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey, 25
 They pitying stand and weep,
 Seeking to drive their thirst away,
 And keep them from the sheep.
 But if they rush dreadful,
 The angels most heedful 30
 Receive each mild spirit,
 New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
 Shall flow with tears of gold:
 And pitying the tender cries, 35
 And walking round the fold,
 Saying: "Wrath by His meekness,
 And by His health sickness,
 Are driven away
 From our immortal day. 40

"And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
 I can lie down and sleep,
 Or think on Him who bore thy name,
 Graze after thee, and weep.

For, washed in life's river, 45
 My bright mane for ever
 Shall shine like the gold,
 As I guard o'er the fold."

Pub. 1794.

STANZAS *from* MILTON

And did those feet in ancient time
 Walk upon England's mountains green?
 And was the holy Lamb of God 15
 On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine 5
 Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
 And was Jerusalem builded here
 Among these dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
 Bring me my arrows of desire! 10
 Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
 Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
 Till we have built Jerusalem 15
 In England's green and pleasant land.

Pub. 1804.

LOVE'S SECRET

Never seek to tell thy love,
 Love that never told can be;
 For the gentle wind doth move
 Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love, 5
 I told her all my heart,
 Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears:—
 Ah! she did depart.

Soon after she was gone from me
 A traveller came by, 10
 Silently, invisibly:
 He took her with a sigh.

Pub. 1804.

INDEXES

INDEX TO THE MAP

These places are named on the map printed as the frontispiece. The letters (e.g., Ca) correspond with those in the margin of the map, and indicate the blocks formed by meridians and parallels within which the places are included.

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Aldborough, Eb.	Cornwall, Bc.	Hastings, Ec.	Naze, The, Ec.	Somersby, Eb.
Alderney, Cd.	Coventry, Db.	Hawarden, Cb.	Nen River, Db.	Somerset, Cc.
Allington, Ec.	Coxwold, Da.	Hawkeshead, Ca.	Nether Stowey, Cc.	South Downs, Dc.
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Anion River, Dc.		Heraford, Cb.	New Radnor, Cb.	Start Point, Cc.
Annan, Ca.	Dartmoor, Cc.	Hertford, Dc.	Newstead Abbey, Db.	Stillington, Da.
Appleby, Ca.	Dartmouth, Cc.	Hipswell, Da.	Newton, Cc.	Stoke Poges, Dc.
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Avon River, Cb.	Dee River, Cb.	Horsham, Dc.	Northallerton, Da.	Strait of Dover, Ec.
Ayr, Ba.	Denbigh, Cb.	Horton, Dc.	Northampton, Db.	Stratford on Avon, Db.
	Deptford, Ec.	Hull, Db.	North Channel, Ba.	Strawberry Hill, Dc.
Banbury, Db.	Derby, Db.	Humber River, Dc.	North Downs, Dc.	Suffolk, Eb.
Bangor, Bb.	Derwent River, Dc.	Huntingdon, Db.	North Foreland, Ec.	Surrey, Dc.
Bardsey Island, Bb.	Derwent Water, Ca.	Hursley, Dc.	Northumberland, Ca.	Sussex, Dc-Ec.
Barnstaple, Bc.	Devon, Bc-Cc.		Da.	Sutton, Da.
Barnstaple Bay, Bc.	Dolgelly, Cb.	Ilseington, Cc.	North York Moors, Da.	Sutton Gold Field, Db.
Bath, Cc.	Don River, Db.	Ipswich, Eb.	Norwich, Eb.	Swale River, Da.
Battle Abbey, Ec.	Don River, Ba.	Irish Sea, Bb.	Nottingham, Db.	Swansea, Cc.
Beachey Head, Ec.	Dorchester, Cc.	Island of Bute, Aa.	Nuneaton, Db.	Swineshead Abbey, Db.
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Ca.	Dulwich, Dc.	Jersey, Cd.	Otery, Cc.	Taw River, Bc-Cc.
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